

Report: Sri Lanka arrests journalists

by UPI

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka -- A media freedom group has condemned the arrest by Sri Lankan police of five Tamil journalists, saying some of the journalists were beaten. Reporters Without Borders, in a news release, said the journalists were arrested by Sri Lanka's anti-terrorist police in Colombo a week ago after accusing them of receiving money from Tamil Tiger rebels. The group said its investigation confirmed the funds "came from a German foundation and from Tamil exiles." The group said it condemns that "some of these journalists were badly beaten during their first few days in detention and that this was clearly done to extract confessions from them." The group said the money received by two of the journalists were to finance the Outreach Web site and to help Tamil students. The group has demanded the Sri Lankan government explain why the journalists are being held as there has been no comment from the government. Sri Lankan security forces have been conducting a campaign against the Tamil Tigers, claiming to have killed dozens of the rebels. The BBC reported campaigners for press freedom say Sri Lanka has become an unsafe place for journalists since the escalation in violence. The Tiger rebels have been fighting since 1983 for an independent homeland for the Tamil-speaking minority on the predominantly Buddhist island nation.

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