

**Tamil paper Uthayan attacked in northern Sri Lanka**  
**BBC News Asia**  
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Masked men in northern Sri Lanka have attacked the offices of a Tamil newspaper and beaten its staff.

The owner of the pro-opposition Uthayan paper said six masked men entered the building in Kilinochchi before dawn.

Two members of staff were badly injured and property damaged, he said.

It is the fourth time this year that Tamil-language newspapers or their distributors have been attacked in Sri Lanka, which is one of the world's most dangerous countries for journalists.

The owner of Uthayan, E Saravanapavan, said six staff members and a driver who had brought copies from the northern town of Jaffna for local distribution had been present at the time of the attack.

He said the six masked men had been shouting in Sinhala, the majority language of Sri Lanka, and waving cricket stumps.

"In the office the manager was sleeping on the floor. They hammered him," Mr Saravanapavan told the BBC.

"Another boy was badly hit - he needed stitches between his ear and his jaw."

The office building and contents and the vehicle from Jaffna were damaged. Police took statements and fingerprints but there were no immediate reports of any arrests.

The BBC's Charles Haviland in Colombo says Uthayan's Jaffna office has been attacked repeatedly over the years and several of its staff have been killed.

A senior editor fled the country after being almost beaten to death in 2011.

Mr Saravanapavan is also a parliamentarian for the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) opposition party.

On Saturday, dozens of people stormed a TNA meeting in Kilinochchi, wielding batons and throwing stones and shouting slogans at those present. No arrests have been made.

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