

## Sri Lankan Journalists in Exile: Manjula Wediwardana

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Journalists related to print media face numerous challenges in media operations, when reporting news related to war, social conflicts, politics, social media and government affairs. According to a report published by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) in 2013, it was discovered, that over 20 Sri Lankan journalists have gone into exile between June 2008 to May 2013 and 3 of them have returned to the country. This research is based on a case study about the journalist, “Manjula Wediwardana” who has left the country in 2010 and took refuge in France due to the political pressure under the previous government. When selecting Manjula Wediwardana for the case study, special focus was given for his contribution to Sinhala literature as a short story writer, poet and as a novelist which made him unique among the other journalists. The objective of this research was to identify, what social and political causes are behind Manjula Wediwardana’s exile. Primary data was collected by semi structured interviews with his fellow journalists and from newspaper articles. The JDS (Journalists for Democracy in Sri Lanka) web page was also used for the secondary data collection. According to the findings of the research, it was revealed, that through his publications, Manjula Wediwardana has highlighted the fact, that the culture and the language of the Tamil community should not be violated, and it is their right to have the ownership of their lands. Due to his publications, focusing the rights of the Tamil community, the Rajapaksha Regime considered him to be a LTTE supportive journalist, publishing articles favoring the Tamil community. This was the starting point to his struggles, where from here onwards he constantly received life threats, harassments and censorship of publication. It was further revealed, that his name was among the first journalists, listed to be executed by the government. Therefore it is evident, that the former government was directly responsible for the exile of Manjula Wediwardana, as he has understood that it is life threatening to stay in a country, which strictly controlling media and continuously harassing it’s journalists using political power.

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