

Reporters Without Borders

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Asia - India

Murder attempt

Woman journalist critically injured in shooting attack in northeast

16 July 2012

Reporters Without Borders condemns a shooting attack yesterday in which **Tongam Rina**, associate editor of the [Arunachal Times](#) newspaper in Itanagar, capital of the northeastern state of Arunachal Pradesh, was seriously injured.

"We urge the authorities to do everything in their power to shed light on this murder attempt, and not to rule out the possibility of a link to the victim's work as a journalist," Reporters Without Borders said. "The sensitive stories Rina has covered could have been the motive. The police should take them into account. They should also take a close look at the companies and government institutions that appeared in her stories."

As Rina arrived at the *Arunachal Times* offices at around 6:15 p.m., unidentified gunmen opened fire on her before fleeing the crime scene. She was rushed to the Rama Krishna Mission Hospital, where she remains in intensive care. The [Times of India](#) quoted hospital sources as saying she sustained serious injuries to the spinal cord and intestines.

The motive of the attack is still unknown but the national and local media have suggested possibilities. The [Seven Sisters Post](#) said it may have been linked to her coverage of alleged corruption in the distribution of food and kerosene to the poor in Arunachal Pradesh state. **Haku Tapa**, a freelancer who worked with her on this story, had to be hospitalized after being attacked a few weeks ago.

Rina is also vice-president of the Siang People's Forum, one of several civil society groups participating in a campaign against the construction of dams on the Siang River. Her newspaper, the *Arunachal Times*, has covered the campaign extensively and opposes the dams.

According to the US journalist [Jason Overdorf](#), there were unsuccessful attempts to intimidate and bribe Rina last year to end her opposition to the dams. The newspaper [Northeast Today](#) said that she recently received threats and that around 10 unidentified individuals ransacked the [Arunachal Times](#) offices on the night of 15 April – an attack that was not claimed by any organization.

India is ranked 131st out of 179 countries in the [2011-2012 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index](#).
