Reporters Without Borders

Asia - Thailand

Attack in early hours

TV station's cars riddled with bullets by unidentified gunmen

30 January 2013

Reporters Without Borders condemns the shooting attack on four cars belonging to the television station **ASTV** carried out in the early hours of 26 January by one or more unidentified people. An investigation is under way and should enable the perpetrators to be identified.

"Spraying a news organization's vehicles with bullets is a serious act," the press freedom organization said. "The attack is a reflection of the current hostile climate for journalists and those who work in news and information in the country. The investigation being carried out by the authorities must be concluded quickly so that those behind the crime are held to account for their actions.

"The authorities must also take action to stem the tide of violence and threats against the media and to protect the right to information."

The attack took place at the head office of *ASTV* at the Baan Chao Phraya building, on Phra Athit Road in Bangkok. The damage was not spotted until the following morning when *ASTV* journalists arrived at the premises. Four cars were riddled with bullets, believed to be from a .22 calibre gun.

After checking video surveillance footage, police said a man dressed in black was seen approaching the scene about 3:25 a.m. General Kamronwit Thoopkrachang, chief of the Metropolitan Police Bureau, said the motive for the attack was not known.

The *ASTV* group is close to the People's Alliance for Democracy, which groups opponents of the current government and who are popularly known the "yellow shirts". A few days ago soldiers held a demonstration outside the group's headquarters in protest at its criticism of the head of the armed forces, General Prayuth Chan-ocha. Gen. Prayuth denied that any soldiers were involved in the attack on *ASTV*.

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