

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/mongolie-editor-of-daily-paper-held-for-two-26-05-2011,40353.html>

Asia - Mongolia

Newspaper editor Dolgor Chuluunbaatar freed on bail

28 July 2011

Reporters Without Borders is relieved to learn that **Dolgor Chuluunbaatar**, the editor of the daily *Ulaanbaatar Times*, was released conditionally on health grounds on 22 July. He is now in hospital receiving treatment for a serious eye infection.

He had been held since 24 March on a charge of illegally privatizing the newspaper. No date has so far been set for the trial, at which he will face the possibility of a 15-year jail sentence.

26.05.2011 - Editor of daily paper held for two months

Reporters Without Borders today voiced "great concern" about the imprisonment for the past two months of **Dolgor Chuluunbaatar**, editor of the daily *Ulaanbaatar Times*, and said it feared he had been "tortured and forced to sign confessions." It called on the government to prove otherwise.

He was arrested in the capital, Ulaanbataar, on 24 March and accused by the Sukhbaatar district court of illegally privatising the paper. Reporters Without Borders is also concerned about the arrest on 27 April of another journalist, who was accused of libelling a minister.

The worldwide press freedom organisation said it was "very worried" about the editor's treatment in prison, since the case was of interest to the government. It said it was quite unlikely that the privatisation of the paper and a state printing works had been done entirely by one person. It urged the government to clarify the matter and allow civil society representatives to visit the prison to check on Chuluunbaatar's health and whether he had been beaten.

He was accused by the court on 7 April of violating in 2008 article 150.3 of the criminal law about private and government property and faces a 15-year prison sentence if convicted. The paper's offices are in a former printing works that belonged to the Ulaabataar city government. He denies the charges. His lawyers have applied nine times to various legal authorities for his release on bail but none have replied.

Chuluunbaatar, a respected TV journalist and former editor of Mongoliin Medee (Mongolian News) and the Daily Independent, is currently vice-president of the Asia Journalist Association and secretary-general of the Confederation of Mongolian Journalists.

Reporters Without Borders is also concerned about the arrest on 27 April of two journalists, **Gantumut Uyanga** and her husband **Baviya Baatarkhuyag**, after they criticised nature, environment and tourism minister Luimed Gansukh in the daily *Udriin Sonin* for moving with his family into a million-dollar house soon after the government signed an agreement with a Canadian firm, Ivanohe Mines, to mine copper and gold at Oyu Tolgoi.

Uyanga told the news website *News.mn* that she and her husband were seized by four police and shoved into a van as they were leaving their house with a friend. "I was forced to kneel down and they smashed my mobile phone," she said.

Both journalists were freed a few hours later. The Ulaanbaatar court upheld on 5 May the dismissal by the Sukhbaatar court on 24 March of a libel suit brought by the minister against Uyanga, who also heads a civil society organisation. She said she would sue police for illegally

arresting her.

Reporters Without Borders calls on the government to “immediately decriminalise defamation” and said prosecution of journalists for what they wrote violated freedom of expression and the media, which were guaranteed by article 16 of the national constitution, article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, all of which Mongolia had signed.

Mongolia ranks 76th out of 178 countries in the current (2010) Reporters Without Borders world press freedom index.
