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New Delhi: November 18, 2014: News Broadcasters Association (NBA) vehemently condemns the brutal assault by policemen on journalists and cameramen who were covering the police action outside the ashram of self-styled godman Baba Rampal in Hisar, Haryana today.

In a press statement today, Mr Rajat Sharma, president NBA, said: "This was a frontal attack on the freedom of the press. The whole nation was watching on television as policemen in 'khaki' were openly beating up journalists and cameramen who were merely doing their job of reporting. Policemen in uniform deliberately damaged expensive TV cameras and cellphones belonging to news channels and reporters, in full view of their senior officials.

"The NBA clearly wishes to put it on record that such a naked show of unbridled 'khaki' power is unacceptable under any canon of democracy. The powers-that-be must understand that the journalists were only carrying out their lawful duty of disseminating information to the people even as events were unfolding right in front of their eyes.

"For over two weeks now, the nation has been watching the spectacle of a state police looking completely helpless in arresting a self-styled godman hidden by his goons in his ashram and producing him before the Hon'ble High Court. On the contrary, the police today unleashed its power on helpless journalists doing their lawful duty.

"The NBA considers this attack a blot on the face of democracy, and an assault on the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression as enshrined in the Constitution", Mr Sharma said.

The NBA President has urged the Chief Minister of Haryana to ensure that action be taken immediately against the men in uniform who ordered and carried out the unprovoked attacks on journalists and cameramen.

"The Chief Minister must take exemplary action against the culprits to ensure that such shameful incidents are not repeated in future", Mr Sharma said.

Annie Joseph
Secretary General