



Pacific Media Watch

Title -- 5884 VANUATU: PMW condemns assault on publisher

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PACIFIC MEDIA WATCH CONDEMNS ASSAULT ON VANUATU PUBLISHER

AUCKLAND (*Pacific Media Watch*): Pacific Media Watch has condemned the cowardly weekend attack on *Vanuatu Daily Post* publisher Marc Neil-Jones, allegedly by prison officers angered over a report and picture published by the daily newspaper.

PMW, part of the Pacific Media Centre, has called for a Vanuatu government crackdown on such brutal “bully boy” tactics by authorities and for a thorough police investigation and prosecution of the assailants.

According to radio and press reports, Neil-Jones, 51, was alone in his *Daily Post* office when attacked on Saturday afternoon. Radio New Zealand International said he suffered a broken nose, a black eye and kicks to his body during the attack.

The *Daily Post* today published a photo of his injuries and also the contentious photo - originally published on Friday - showing the Correctional Service Centre with gates wide open and no security guards on duty.

Pacific Media Centre director associate professor David Robie said: “This is another shocking attack on a well-respected and courageous Vanuatu publisher who has often borne the brunt of vengeful retribution for publishing critical news in the public interest.”

Neil-Jones has also on several occasions been the target of heavy handed attacks by authorities and politicians.

In 2000, he was deported by then Prime Minister Barak Sope for publishing so-called “state secrets”.

Neil-Jones has filed a formal complaint of assault and Vanuatu police are investigating.

- *Vanuatu Daily Post report on the assault – ‘Publisher assaulted by prison officers’:*
www.dailypost.vu/index.php?news=3541&VivvoSessionId=6cab49564973e4c425a5f

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