

Media watchdog condemns Serbia attack on columnist

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BELGRADE, Serbia -- A media watchdog group says the press freedom situation in Serbia is "alarming" following the weekend attack on a liberal columnist.

The South East Europe Media Organization, or SEEMO, says the attack on Teofil Pancic late Saturday was a "flagrant violation of press freedom."

Two masked assailants attacked Pancic with a metal bar, injuring him on the head and right arm. Pancic's liberal Vreme weekly said Monday he had left the country after the attack.

Pancic is known for his fierce criticism of Serbian nationalism and extremism.

SEEMO says "it is very worrisome that brutal physical attacks on journalists, such as this, still occur in Serbia."

Police say they are searching for the attackers.