

May 2, 2007

TO: ALL NEWS EDITORS

PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

In commemorating the International Press Freedom Day on May 3, 2007, the National Union of Journalists Malaysia (NUJM) strongly urges the Government to acknowledge the existence of Internet citizen reporting and blogging as new media for disseminating information.

This online phenomenon has made a great impact in Malaysia as alternative information source on the current events and issues affecting the public.

The usage of Internet and the concept of the uncensored "Borderless World" have made information more easily accessible to anyone.

As such, any abuses committed by public officials can be immediately exposed on the Internet.

In that note, the union urges the Government to ensure greater accountability, transparency, and improve the current delivery system in meeting its sworn democratic duties.

Although the Internet is filled with scores of information, yet any matter relating to corruption and misuse of power by government officials will be immediately highlighted for public scrutiny and assessment on online forums and chat rooms.

Thus, the growth of this new media channel for the public to express their concern on Government shortcomings is raising their standing and influence to that of the mainstream media and changing the current journalism landscape.

In view of this latest development, the NUJ feels that the Government should accord greater freedom to the local media by amending media restrictive laws such as the Printing Presses and Publications Act and the Official Secrets Act (OSA).

The NUJ strongly feels that the enactment of a Freedom of Information Act can improve the flow of information between Government agencies and the media/members of the public.

The OSA has also curbed the growth of investigative journalism in Malaysia, often resulting in mild reporting of issues concerning public interest.

On behalf of the Executive Council

NORILA MOHD DAUD
President