

Sept 25, 1995

To: All News Editors

PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The National Union of Journalists (NUJ) welcomes the statement by MIC President Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu that he should not be associated with death threats against The Sun reporter Selvi Gopal over an article on the dowry system.

In fact, the question does not arise at all as at no point of time did NUJ associate Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu with the death threats.

It is the role and responsibility of NUJ, as the largest organisation representing journalists in the country, to ensure the safety of journalists during the course of their professional duties.

The reporter concerned has received threats of bodily harm. We reiterate that NUJ will not tolerate or condone any threats or acts of violence against journalists.

It's also the role and responsibility of NUJ to ensure that journalists are not abused, verbally or physically, during the course of their professional duties.

NUJ does not dictate what journalists or writers should write as we uphold the principles of a free and independent Press.

However, we expect journalists to abide by NUJ's Code of Ethics and be responsible in their reports in the sense that there should be balanced reporting and that journalists should be sensitive to issues pertaining to race and religion.

Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu is free to criticise the article if he is unhappy.

Make clarifications, give your perspective. If you think it is wrong, say so. If you think the article has adverse effects, say your piece. Express your indignations. But do so in a rational manner with the effect of calming the situation. And please do not be personal and call the reporter concerned, a " fool of the highest order."

In this context, we would expect Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu to be cordial in his relationship with the Press to enhance his credibility and standing as a veteran politician.

On behalf of the NUJ Executive Council,

OON EE SENG
General Secretary