

November 10, 1996

To: All New Editors

PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The National Union of Journalists Malaysia is concerned that the Government has detained a number of journalists covering the Asia-Pacific Conference on East Timor (APCET II) in Kuala Lumpur.

NUJ calls on the Government to release all the journalists immediately.

We regret that the Government has detained at least six local and foreign journalists, namely Steven Gan (The Sun), Sharaad Khuttan (freelance journalist), Sonny Inbamaj (The Nation, Bangkok), Roger Mitton (Asiaweek), Premesh Chandran (The Sun) and Catherine McCrath (ABC Radio).

NUJ regrets that the Government has taken such Draconian action against journalists.

It is a blow against Press freedom and obstructs journalists from carrying out their professional duties.

There is nothing to fear over the Asia-Pacific Conference on East Timor and freedom of speech as enshrined in the Malaysian Constitution should be allowed.

The Government action would have adverse international implications and would affect Malaysia's international image.

As such, NUI calls on the Government to release the journalists immediately.

NUJ is taking the matter seriously and is monitoring the situation closely.

We hope good sense would prevail on the part of the Government.

On behalf of the Executive Council,

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General Secretary