

March 9, 1999

To: All News Editors

PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The National Union of Journalists Malaysia regrets the attack on a Sin Chew Jit Poh reporter by a group of disgruntled residents over the alleged misreporting on the current wake of the Japanese encephalitis disease in Ladang Tanah Merah in Port Dickson.

Wong Kam Yong, 28, a reporter from Sin Chew Jit Poh, Seremban Branch was attacked by several villagers from the Tanah Merah site A who did not take into consideration Wong's explanation that he was not responsible for the misreporting.

The aggression was purported to have been stirred up by the village headman during a dialogue session between Deputy Education Minister Datuk Dr Fong Chan Onn and parents of SRJK (Cina) Bukit Pelandok students on Monday morning.

The National Union of Journalists Malaysia (NUJ) views this matter seriously as this can create an unhealthy and unnecessary tension for journalists to serve the public interest in important current issues pertaining to the event.

NUJ regrets that there are still some group of people who take the law into their own hands. They should instead use proper channels to voice out their complaints and dissatisfactions.

The Press is one of the channels for the people to forward their complaints and journalists for that matter are only carrying out their professional duties for the well-being of the public.

Attacks on journalists are uncalled for as the country provides the necessary laws and provisions in safeguarding the interest of every Malaysian citizen. Problems and dissatisfactions cannot be solved through violence.

On behalf of the NUJ Executive Council,

NORILA MOHD DAUD
President