

Dec 29, 2001

PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The National Union of Journalists Malaysia is aware of the current controversy surrounding an article by The SUN newspaper on Dec 25, 2001, on an alleged plot to assassinate the Prime Minister and his deputy and would like to put on record that:

- 1) THE NUJ regrets that the statement by its president Norila Md Daud on the issue which was carried by RTM1 at 8pm on Dec 26, 2001, had not been used in full, resulting in an inaccurate interpretation of the Union's stand on the matter. The full statement is as follows:

“ We believe The SUN newspaper would not have published the article without checking and confirming the credibility of the sources first.

“We feel that the article was written in good faith to alert the public and authorities on the possible plot which could pose a threat to national interest.

“Although the article did not carry a named source, it does not necessarily mean that there was no element of truth in it.

“The brave action by The SUN newspaper was to protect the country's two leaders.

“Under certain situations, authorities may not want to co-operate with journalists to confirm certain issues.

“It is excellent if journalists follow the code of ethics and have stories with reliable, credible sources and concrete facts

“Speculative stories that would cause harm and unnecessary chaos to the country should be avoided.

- 2) THE NUJ also regrets that the Sun Media Corp Sdn Bhd's management and board of directors have not handled the controversy well and this has resulted in tremendous pressures being placed on our members in The SUN, affecting

them from performing their journalistic duties. We would also like to note that our members' morale has been severely affected.

- 3) THE NUJ demands that the indefinite suspension on journalist R. Manirajan and photographer Anita Md Nasir be lifted with immediately without any prejudice to their record. The Union is of the view that both Manirajan and Anita have performed their duties professionally without any malice in filing the article. We would also like to state that they have acted under the lawful instructions from their editorial bosses and should not be made the "fall guys" in the company's efforts to escape negative publicity generated by the article. We are aware that Manirajan and Anita have been placed under tremendous emotional pressures arising from their suspension.

Thank you.

HONG BOON HOW
General Secretary