

16 August, 2011

TO: ALL NEWS EDITORS

PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media statement from National Union of Journalists (NUJ) in response to government's proposal to review media censorship policy.

1. The NUJ welcomes the statement from the nation's top political executive, PM Datuk Seri Najib Razak.
2. His view is a step in the right direction as he understands the role of media in nation building.
3. We have always believed that media censorship policy can no longer work in an era where the people have the ability to compare and access to news outbreak and issues of public importance in the internet and through sms.
4. People are also attracted to news portals (eg. Malaysiakini, The Malaysian Insider Malaysia Today), blogs, facebook and twitters to get the latest and wholesome information.
5. If the traditional media like newspapers continue to practice censorship policy, they are actually doing a great disservice as the elected government of the day will be denied an effective feedback.
6. The NUJ believes editors are also "overly cautious" because they do not want to lose their jobs or do not want to be hauled up by the licensing authority, the Home Ministry.
7. This has resulted, slowly but surely, readers having shifting to the alternative media when their confidence in newspapers have been shattered. And the effect, for the moment, is declining circulation.
8. We reiterate our stand that the government abolish Printing, Presses and Publication Act 1984 as the legislation stifles the existence of the print publication.
9. We will not be able to compete with the alternative media under present circumstances.
10. Let us have a self-regulated media council to manage the affairs of the Fourth Estate, including the practice of ethical journalism .
11. On the same note , NUJ takes the stand the print media owners must also be held accountable if their newspapers and staff violate public and private laws .
12. The individuals concerned shall be held responsible, not the newspapers, in a court of law.



V. Anbalagan
General Secretary