

JULY 09, 2012

To all editors.

PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NUJ: Be Fair To Those Holding Public Office

The National Union of Journalists Peninsular Malaysia (NUJ) takes a strong view that the media, which is in the business of influencing people, must be fair to all, irrespective if one is holding public office or an ordinary citizen.

The media must be fair in its coverage like giving space to alternative views and opportunity to aggrieved parties the right to be heard or rebut criticisms.

They cannot claim to be fair in opposition coverage by merely allocating space that only carry negative news about individuals, policies and their parties.

The private media is a business and the public expects value for their money. The public who are also voters will judge them.

Declining readership and circulation in the print media are symptoms that the public no longer believe blindly what is being dished out to them.

On the same breadth, the NUJ calls on Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng to lift the ban on selected media organisations from covering state and local government affairs in the state.

We also urge him to engage the media in a professional manner.

As Lim and his government was elected by the people, he should learn to live with the perils of holding public office, like a person who loves roses but cannot escape being pricked by thorns.

To make a comparison, Lim is in a better position to get his messages across now compared to his DAP predecessor, secretary-general and former Opposition Parliamentary Leader Lim Kit Siang.

Or for that matter, Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Aziz Nik Mat (1999- until now), former Terengganu Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang (1999-2004) and ex-Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Joseph Pairin Kitingan when PBS ruled the State between 1990-1994.

These individuals did not impose a blanket ban on media to cover their event and media conferences but they learnt how to deal with the Press.

They did not have the advantage of social media and alternative media to reply to criticisms.

Lim's action to bar journalists run contrary to the freedom of the Press that he and his colleagues in Pakatan Rakyat espouse.

The working journalists in public and private owned media want to do a honest job to earn their livelihood.

What finally appears and the slant taken by pro establishment print and broadcast media is the decision of media editors and media owners.

NUJ is at the same time against slanderous and libelous action by any party.

NUJ Executive Council

(Statement is released following an executive council meeting today)