

February 7, 2016

TO ALL NEWS EDITORS

PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE National Union of Journalists Malaysia (NUJ) strongly objects to the proposal made by Attorney General on the implementation of law for journalists to disclose their news sources.

This is contrary to the ethics of journalism itself to protect sources of information gathered for a news report. Statement by the Attorney General to amend the Official Secrets Act 1972 to include imprisonment and/or 10 strokes of the cane is unjust and undemocratic.

It is an injustice to journalists because it undermines the role of journalists to report the truth that all Malaysians must be informed on anything that has relevance to religion, race and country.

In Malaysia a journalist has a duty under the scope of the code of ethics in which each journalist should adhere to the moral tenets outlined by the National Union of Journalists Peninsular Malaysia, which include respect for the truth and the right for the people to get a true and accurate statement, defending two important principles; which are the freedom to find and print a report in good faith, the right to comment and criticize fairly without pressure from various quarters and the report must solely based on clear facts from authentic and legitimate sources.

The means used to obtain news, photographs and important documents should be carried out in an honest way and according to the laws that have been set.

Journalists must also be able to retract and resume a true statement if there is an error in the initial report.

Journalists also need to respect and safeguard the source who does not want his/her name mentioned.

NUJ unanimously opposes the proposal made by the Attorney General and describes the proposal as anti-democratic and having reserves element to stifle journalists from carrying out their duties professionally.

If in this case, NUJM advises journalists when reporting any news concerning the government, must first obtain written confirmation from the minister or the Attorney General that they are not the leaked information.

Although we only report the news but we would be under threat that the information was leaked by someone else, and we all know the power of the Attorney General, as he has shown recently.

NUJ advises all parties in the media industry from now on must be on the alert and take caution. NUJM will not be responsible for the risk of its members being charged and jailed for life and/or 10 strokes of the cane.

On behalf of the Executive Council,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. De Rozario", with a horizontal line extending to the right and a small flourish below the name.

SCHAVE JEROME DE ROZARIO
General Secretary NUJM