



3 August, 2020

YAB Tan Sri Dato' Haji Muhyiddin bin Haji Mohd. Yassin
Prime Minister's Office of Malaysia
Main Block, Perdana Putra Building
Federal Government Administrative Centre
62502 Putrajaya
ppm@pmo.gov.my

Dear Prime Minister,

We write as a coalition of press freedom organisations and civil society groups in Malaysia to express our concern over the case against **Malaysiakini** and its editor-in-chief Steven Gan and call on the Prime Minister to uphold press freedom and respect the rights of journalists.

Thank you for your consideration.

Statement

We, the undersigned, express our deep concern over the contempt proceedings against online news outlet **Malaysiakini** and its editor-in-chief Steven Gan. The case stands to undermine press freedom and runs counter to widely accepted international human rights standards on freedom of expression.

The charge against **Malaysiakini** and Steven Gan is contempt of court, a charge brought because the online news outlet briefly hosted user comments which allegedly insulted the judiciary. The comments were removed within minutes of police notifying the news portal. **Malaysiakini's** actions surrounding these readers' comments have been entirely appropriate and in line with media regulations in Malaysia.

We stand in solidarity with **Malaysiakini** and Steven Gan and are concerned at any attempts by authorities to undermine the media and independence in Malaysia. **Malaysiakini** has a well-earned reputation of honest, independent journalism and has played a central role in strengthening and democratising freedom of speech in Malaysia.

If the applicant's contempt of court case is proven, this will have a chilling effect on media organisations, civil society groups, journalists and the general public by repressing public debate that is a cornerstone of an open and democratic society.

We call on Malaysia's Government to ensure that its legal system protects the rights of journalists, respects the media's role as a pillar of democracy in Malaysia and that it opposes the imposition of any penalties or liabilities which stifle freedom of expression.

The Government of Malaysia has the unique opportunity to champion the public's right to information and continue to advance the country as a strong democracy protecting fundamental human rights.



Signed:

National Union of Journalists Peninsular Malaysia (NUJM)
Centre for Independent Journalism (CIJ)
CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation
EMPOWER Malaysia (Pusat Kesedaran Komuniti Selangor)
Federation of Sarawak Journalists Association (FSJA)
Gerakan Media Merdeka (Geramm)
Institute of Journalists Malaysia (IoJ)
Malaysian Action for Justice and Unity (MAJU) Foundation
Sabah Journalists Association (SJA)
Saya Anak Bangsa Malaysia (SABM)
Suara Rakyat Malaysia (SUARAM)
The Association of Women Lawyers
Women's Aid Organisation (WAO) (Malaysia)

cc

Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission

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