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**TO ALL NEWS EDITORS**

**PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

The National Union of Journalists Peninsular Malaysia (NUJM) expresses its grave concern over the government's move to gazette an ordinance purportedly to combat "fake news" relating to Covid-19 or the emergency proclamation.

NUJ Malaysia is not agreeing to this kind of step backwards action taken as it seems like the ruling government is trying to silent the voice of every citizen regardless of their race, religion or various background.

We called on the government's plan of setting up the Media Council to be revived and accelerate just to tackle any issues regarding to media practitioners especially journalists who are in the frontline. The union is in the view that Media Council can also be in charge of looking into the alleged fake news crime committed instead of the government having to gazette new laws to tackles this. This in turn will display transparency over the alleged crime committed.

The Government, through the new emergency ordinance to curb fake news may be seen as controversial, which supposedly must be passed by elected parliamentarians through Dewan Rakyat sitting.

The Perikatan Nasional Government should wait for a proper sitting of Parliament before the new ordinance be passed which may have serious consequences upon the Rakyat as a whole. The act may look agreeable. However, so far there is no clear definition of what constitute "fake news".

Malaysia has scrapped the Anti- Fake News Act in 2019 by previous Pakatan Harapan government, and it has welcomed by the local media practitioners at that time. Unfortunately after the PN government took over the administrative power, the nation's press freedom was now increasing seen to be clamped or suppressed.

With this NUJM is concerned over the government's intent and possible abuse that may develop as a consequence. Anyone who disagrees with the Covid19 may also be taken action upon with any forms of dissemination of news concerning the matter.

It may also be constituted as "fake news" on any article that the government views as disagreeable unless the government set up a proper independent body to look into the alleged fake news crime committed.

**CHIN SUNG CHEW**

General Secretary

National Union Of Journalists Peninsular Malaysia

