

May 3, 1999

To: All News Editors

**PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

The National Union of Journalists Malaysia (NUJ) is faced with many challenges as it approaches the new millennium.

The regional economic crisis which has severely affected our country has not spared the local newspaper industry. Many of our fellow colleagues have lost their jobs due to downsizing as a result of poor sales and a sharp drop in advertising profits.

As we grapple with the various challenges, the NUJ is also concerned with upholding Press freedom and credibility of information dissemination.

As we celebrate World Press Freedom Day today, the NUJ reiterates its call to the Government to provide a more favourable and conducive environment for the Press to operate without fear or favour to encourage journalistic excellence of the highest calibre.

As an organisation that represents the welfare of Malaysian journalists, the NUJ views with great concern the recent attacks on journalists by street demonstrators and urges restraint on the part of all concerned.

A media which is perceived to be biased will be unable to convey its message to the masses in the right perspective and thereby hinder the Government's move to rescue Malaysia from its economic doldrums.

A media which has lost its credibility will be shunned by readers, resulting in readers turning to alternative sources of information.

The NUJ therefore urges the Government to repeal the Official Secrets Act 1972, the printing Presses and Publications Act 1984 and the other relevant laws to help build an informed society in this era of information explosion.

On behalf of the Executive Council,

HONG BOON HOW  
General Secretary