

June 11, 2003

TO: All News Editors

**PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

The National Union of Journalists Malaysia expresses its deepest regret over the exclusion of senior journalist and NUJ member Terence Fernandez from the Yang di-Pertuan Agung's birthday honour list last week.

We would like to note that Fernandez, a chief reporter with the Sun Media Group, was one of the ten local newsmen who risked their lives filing reports from war-torn Baghdad, Iraq as part of the Joint Media Team Malaysia (JMTM).

For the record, Fernandez and the JMTM entered Iraq from Jordan on April 10, 2003 to provide news coverage for Malaysian media.

Fernandez and New Straits Times photographer Mohd Anuar Hashim and RTM cameraman Omar Salleh were fired upon and abducted by gunmen on April 12, 2003 while executing their professional duties for the nation.

The exclusion of Fernandez from the King's birthday honour list showed that the Government has not considered his bravery and his service to the country.

We view the snub as hurtful and disappointing to the local media fraternity as there are other members of the JMTM who were awarded at least an AMN although they have not set foot in Baghdad.

We also would like to note that Fernandez while on his stint in Iraq came under gunfire attacks twice in which he could have lost his life on both occasions.

Any differences the government may have with Fernandez should not be grounds for his exclusion from the awards.

The Union urges the Government to take immediate remedial action to record its appreciation to Fernandez who had served the country courageously

On behalf of the Executive Council

HONG BOON HOW  
General Secretary