

Jan 5, 2011

To News Editors:

**PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**UTUSAN MELAYU'S DECISION TO HOLD A DOMESTIC INQUIRY AGAINST NUJ  
PRESIDENT HATA WAHARI**

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The National Union of Journalists (NUJ) held an emergency executive council meeting on Tuesday night and unanimously held that:

1) It is disappointed with the Utusan Melayu management for having deferred Hata Wahari's domestic inquiry (DI). Hata's alleged misconduct has been hanging over his head over the last two months.

The company had earlier fixed the DI for Thursday (Jan 6) but in a letter dated Jan 3 (Monday), it deferred the case to Jan 17.

Hata is facing eight counts of misconduct for issuing statements to news portals Malaysiakini, Malaysian Insider and Merdeka Review, and The Sun newspaper between Sept 21 and Oct 14 last year.

The NUJ still hopes Utusan Melayu would seriously consider calling off the DI. We take the stand that Hata, in his capacity as NUJ president, issued the statements in defence of press freedom and the welfare of members. Utusan's stand is ludicrous as it claimed that Hata, as employee of the company, had tarnished its image.

2) The NUJ takes the view that the DI against Hata, who is also the Confederation of Asean Journalists president, is an act of victimisation of a union leader.

It is also aimed at crippling the NUJ leadership and to serve as a warning against Utusan Melayu-based unionists.

The company had previously held DI against its former branch chairman Amran Ahmad, which led to his dismissal in September 2009. Amran's case is now in the Industrial Court.

3) The NUJ views with concern the management's letter to Hata, which specifically spelt out that he could only obtain the assistance of Utusan Melayu employees to represent him during the DI. The letter states that since this is a DI, outside representatives are barred.

We are of the view that Hata has the right to be represented by an union official from the NUJ since the Utusan Melayu branch is affiliated to the national body.

If Utusan Melayu is an in-house union, Hata could then be represented by its chairman or secretary.

Nowhere in the NUJ-UM collective agreement (2005-2008) detailed that Hata could only be represented by someone within the company.

[The 2008-2011 CA dispute is now before the Industrial Court because of a deadlock.]  
So it cannot unilaterally lay conditions and deny Hata a representative of his choice.

Even when Amran was hauled before a DI, the prosecuting officer raised an objection when general-secretary V.Anbalagan attempted to represent him.

The DI panel allowed the objection and Amran was represented by Utusan journalists.

All these show that Utusan is anti-union and has scant regard for justice and fair play.

On behalf of the executive council.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'V. Anbalagan', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

**V.ANBALAGAN**  
General Secretary