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TO ALL NEWS EDITORS

PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Putrajaya: Proposal by Attorney General of Malaysia Tan Sri Mohamed Apandi Ali to review the sentence under the Official Secrets Act (OSA) 1972 is not targeting journalists who write news reports adhering to code of journalistic ethics.

Instead, the proposal is subjected to any whistleblower who the government adjudicates could affect the security and stability of the country.

He also stressed that it is a proposal to the Government and is still open for further action before any approved is made.

He added that the power to approve any amendments to the law is not under his authority but must be brought to the Parliament for any approval.

"Everyone has the right to give his or her viewpoint including me but it is up to the government's view whether to accept or not. Our department does not make any policy" he said.

"I also want to stress that we are not restricting journalists their freedom of the press to write reports in concurrent with verified facts and adhering to the journalists code of ethics.

"Hence, all journalists do not have to worry about the proposed amendment as it does not affect the profession of journalists in conveying information to the government and people," he assured the National Union of Journalists Malaysia (NUJM) Exco during a meeting at his office here today.

In the one hour meeting, NUJM also presented a memorandum that listed 10 issues protecting the rights of journalists to write reports without fear nor worrying over being penalised under the OSA Act..

Recently, a Chinese newspaper quoted Mohamed Apandi as saying he is considering to amend the OSA to amplify penalties against those involved in divulging state secrets and also against those who have reported the news.

Mohamed Apandi also reported as saying that journalists who were found to protect or refusing to disclose the source of information could also be subjected to such charge.

Additionally, he reminded journalists to determine the submitted information from their source, whether it is a confidential government documents or not to prevent journalists from being convicted under Section 8 of the OSA.

He said the relevant section of the official secrets act penalises any possession or in control of any official secret, delivering, using, storing the property or wrongful communication of the documents which would endanger the safety of an official secret.

"We are responsible for determining the trust given to us and it must be carefully kept because the act (of leaking state secrets) may affect national security.

"We are concerned that widespread leakage of government information, especially by unprofessional journalists who are not registered nor would adhere to the professional code of ethics will soon contaminate the actual journalistic profession.

NUJ Executive Council

