



5 May, 2021

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**TO: ALL NEWS EDITORS**

**PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**SCREWS TIGHTEN ON PRESS FREEDOM IN MALAYSIA**

In conjunction with World Press Freedom Day on May 3, NUJ Malaysia today officially launched the Malaysia Media Report 2020. It is our fervent hope that the discussion of a number of issues involving journalists will rouse the government's attention and awareness towards freedom of speech and the freedom of the press in our country.

Malaysia Media Report 2020 reviews the challenges met by journalists in the country in their profession. These findings also reveal that Malaysian media are faced with difficulties and obstacles under the current government regime as it had been seen that several journalists were harassed over their articles and further been personally attacked.

In addition, the current Perikatan Nasional government was perceived to violate the press freedom by summoning some reporters and correspondents for police investigations relating to so called inaccuracies over news reports or public information. Some of them were also summoned by the police for investigation under the Panel Code and OSA. The details of the respective cases can be found in the report.

This media report was thoroughly researched and undertaken with the assistance of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) Asia-Pacific Region and from generous funding by the European Union.

NUJ Malaysia is an affiliate member of the IFJ. As early as the union's establishment in 1962, the NUJ had its affiliation with IFJ to become a part of a global journalistic union family.

IFJ has 187 organization members in approximately 140 countries around the world. Every year, it discusses the general situation of the media operation of each member state on the working environment, welfare and treatment of journalists in its attempt to improve and address any inequitable treatment or threats to the lives and welfare of journalists.

This year, IFJ Asia-Pacific assisted NUJ in the survey reports, which include the discussion on gender and diversity of media personnel, the impact of the Covid19 pandemic on the media industry, the development of press freedom and the formation of the Malaysian Media Council.

Civil societies and non-governmental organizations have taken a rigorous wait-and-see attitude towards the new government that came to power in the "Sheraton Coup" last year. In particular, how the government would treat the media had attracted deep attention from non-governmental organizations and the people..

The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic has intensified the blow to domestic media employees. Under the ongoing pandemic, many industries have been unable to withstand the economic shock and declared collapse. Media companies were no exception, especially traditional print media were the first to bear the brunt.

To add, media companies that weren't financially viable, such as Utusan Melayu and Kosmo were liquidated and closed before the pandemic even began. As a result, employees were unreasonably dismissed and NUJ was forced to assist members legally in recovering their dues. The case is still in the Courts. Many journalists have since left the media profession.

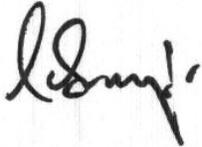


All these reported cases are not conducive to the right of freedom of speech and an attack on the freedom of press. They are revealed through this report and deserve keen attention from the government, media industries and society as a whole.

The government authorities, especially the relevant ministries which are responsible for the welfare of the media industry must seriously look into the findings of this report and we hope the government take concern and seek proper solutions to address these issues immediately.

This media report was thoroughly researched and undertaken with the assistance of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) Asia-Pacific Region and with generous funding by the European Union, **under the EU Strengthening Malaysia's Media for Change project**

On Behalf of the Executive Council,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chin Sung Chew', written in a cursive style.

**CHIN SUNG CHEW**  
General Secretary