



31 October, 2022

TO ALL NEWS EDITORS

PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The National Union of journalists Peninsular Malaysia (NUJ) reiterates the High Court ruling over the Utusan Melayu VSS case in which some 600 employees of Utusan Melayu (M) Bhd under a voluntary separation scheme (VSS) who are still owed nearly RM60 million in backdated wages and benefits.

The Utusan employees affected are considered beneficiary trustees of the properties, and not creditors as High Court judge Nadzarin Wok Nordin ruled on Tuesday, Oct 23, 2022.

As the court viewed that the VSS employees who are involved in the VSS exercise are beneficiaries of the trust properties, they stand outside the liquidation process and are entitled to the benefit of the trust properties," the judge said.

Therefore, as trustees, the employees therefore have the right to be paid ahead of the creditors.

There were only eight payments made by Utusan Melayu to staff who took the VSS prior to a creditors voluntary liquidation (CVL) exercise dated Oct 7, 2019 which required a total of 12 payments over a period of 12 months, and the payments to be made to the VSS employees after statutory deductions, debt owing, and other official processes were completed.

The learned judge noted that a letter dated Oct 8, 2019, by Utusan Melayu chairman Datuk Abdul Aziz Sheikh Fadzir stated that an agreement had been arrived at whereby the payments of the VSS would be made using funds obtained from the sale of Kumpulan Utusan, or Utusan Group, assets.

NUJ therefore urges the liquidators entrusted with the trust to ensure that the workers involved in the VSS receive their compensation as soon as possible. Previously we have demanded that the new owner and the employer fulfil their promise to pay the balance of the VSS using funds from the sale of properties owned by Utusan Melayu Malaysia Berhad.

NUJ also hopes that at the same time apart from the workers under the VSS, the hundreds of UMMB workers who were laid off due to the winding up of the company's operations are also given due attention and be paid their due compensation.

All of NUJ- Utusan members and non-members alike who were retrenched including whose salaries were not paid even while the Utusan company was still under operation have endured tremendous suffering as a result of being dismissed without proper compensation. Most of those who lost their livelihood lived in very challenging conditions over the few years after the Utusan closure.

On behalf of the NUJ Executive Committee,

CHIN SUNG CHEW
General Secretary

