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Hate journalism can cause disunity, says Khalil

PETALING JAYA, Wed. - The media should not be used by certain parties to promote the idea of hate journalism which can cause disunity among Malaysians, Information Minister Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob said tonight.

"When this happens, our media will be in a state of conflict and certain parties will take advantage of this and try to promote their own agenda," he said at the Malaysian Press Institute awards presentation. "The media must never be used as a tool to impose hatred or malice. It holds great power and is capable of bringing down politicians and ministers."

Khalil warned that the power held by the media came with great responsibilities, hence it should not have any agenda except to report the truth and help develop society.

"The responsibility of the media goes beyond accurate and fair reporting. It must work together in realising the objectives set by the country, which is to create a peaceful and stable society where everyone will prosper."

On the state of the Malaysian media, Khalil said it had made much progress. He cited as an example the contributions of the Joint Media Team Malaysia (JMTM) in Iraq recently.

"The ability of the team to accurately report what happened in the wartorn country shows our capability."

He expressed hope that JMTM would mark the beginning of serious and direct involvement of the Malaysian media in reporting about major events in the world. This would also reduce the need to depend on reports churned out by the foreign Press.

On Press freedom, Khalil reiterated the stand of former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad that total freedom of the Press never existed.

"It is a myth invented by the so-called liberal West to serve their own purpose."