

## **Veteran journo: Back media council, even if gov't initiative**

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**By Aidila Razak**

Veteran journalist A Kadir Jasin has thrown his support behind the mooted media council, even though it is a government initiative.

Speaking to reporters in Damansara yesterday, he said that the fact that it is set up by the government is not a deal-breaker as long as there are ample media representatives.

"I'm in agreement that the council should be formed although the latest initiative is taken by the government... as long as the media is adequately represented (on the council)," he said.

The former New Straits Times Press group editor-in-chief, who yesterday received the Anugerah Tokoh Wartawan from the Malaysian Press Institute (MPI) for his work in journalism since 1969, said the idea for a self-regulating media was raised many years ago.

However, Kadir said there has always been a dispute over who would lead such a council.

"Editors tried to form it those days by having the Editors Association, but there was a lot of opposition and suspicions about who was to run the council and what powers it should have," he said about efforts dating back to the 1970s.

### Journalists oppose media council

The aim of the media council, among others, is to take action against errant publications and thus removing the need for laws stifling press freedom.

Journalists are however opposed to the proposed council because the government is not willing to repeal the Printing Presses and Publications Act which has kept the media in check.

Kadir said that the struggle to form such a council "perhaps is coming towards the end of the road", especially if the same issues are not resolved this time around.

In a forum last May, Universiti Teknologi Petronas communications lecturer Ahmad Murad Merican said that it was not appropriate for the government to form a self-regulatory council as "whoever announces a self-regulatory mechanism normally also controls that 'self-regulation'."

Ahmad Murad had led a panel of seven to select Kadir as the ninth person to receive the MPI award, after the likes of A Samad Ismail, Zainudin Maidin and CC Liew.

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