

'Repeal PPPA, arrest press freedom decline'

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As Malaysia continues to slide down the press freedom index, the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) has called on the government to abolish laws that stifle the media.

In a statement today, NUJ president Chin Sung Chew said the Printing, Presses and Publishing Act (PPPA) 1984 and other relevant laws should be repealed.

"Malaysia's press freedom development has been stagnant for the past 56 years and has seen a decline with the system of one-party ruling in Malaysia," he added.

Chin said the media industry and the public are seeing the declining figures as a worrying inclination, stunting the growth and development of the media industry in Malaysia.

Undoubtedly, he said, it also serves as a stumbling block to a democratic process that is stalling or going into reverse.

"It is undermining human rights issues and press freedom that eventually would create an adverse trend in a developing country such as Malaysia.

"NUJ strongly opposes media manipulation by political parties or government monopoly, especially when the press freedom ranking we have seen is closely related to the government of a country that is not epitomising democratic openness," he added.

With BN parties controlling newspapers, Chin said the print media has become the mouthpiece of the ruling party instead of playing its role as the mouthpiece of the people.

"This has resulted in the newspapers losing their credibility. NUJ calls for the government to re-examine the issues curbing press freedom in Malaysia," he added.

Chin was responding to Reporters San Frontieres (Reporters Without Borders) latest press freedom index which saw Malaysia dropping to 147 from 145 in 2012.

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