

**Stop banning TV3, Utusan from coverage, PKR told  
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The Gerakan Media Marah (Geramm) today urged both sides of the political divide to provide free access to its functions for all journalists, and to stop banning selected media organisations from covering their press conferences or events.

The latest incident occurred yesterday when PKR banned TV3 and Utusan Malaysia from attending a press conference at its headquarters, following a generic ban on both organisations from attending press conferences at PKR headquarters.

"Geramm urges that such bans be lifted because it clearly violates media freedom that ought to be respected by all parties," it said in a statement today.

On another note, Geramm also urged both TV3 and Utusan Malaysia to observe journalism ethics in reporting, so that no parties could find excuses to ban media organisations in the future.

Currently, online portals face various restrictions in attending government functions.

Malaysiakini has been banned from covering any events at the Home Ministry, most recently in December last year, whereas all three major news portals - Malaysiakini, The Malaysian Insider, and Free Malaysia Today - are barred from attending the monthly Umno supreme council meet.

On Jan 27, Malaysiakini was barred from a press conference by Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin regarding price hikes.

Geramm also said that the government's refusal to allow radio station BFM from airing an interview with opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim recently as "odd and embarrassing".

### **Freedom in Internet, but not in radio?**

"This action clearly indicates that the government only opens freedom in Internet, but restricts it in the radio," Geramm secretariat noted.

It stressed that media freedom should be integral, and cannot be confined to certain mediums alone, despite claims from a government spokesperson recently that media freedom in the country has progressed under the stewardship of Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak (right).

A statement from the Prime Minister's Office yesterday claimed that one only needed to visit "a news website or a political blog to see how free the media is".

The statement was in response to Malaysia's slide down the Press Freedom Index to the 147th place, which is its worst ever placing in the index.

It is now two places behind Myanmar, which has been implementing reforms since 2011. Its best performance in the Press Freedom Index was in 2006 when it ranked 92nd when Abdullah Ahmad Badawi was the prime minister.

"The government's action to continue creating confusing excuses, yet failing to take stock of current realities, will not bring Malaysia anywhere," it added.

Meanwhile in a separate statement, PAS Youth deputy chief Khairil Nizam Khirudin said that all the media organisations in the country needed to form an unified movement to relieve themselves from political influences.

He warned that if there is no drastic improvement from Najib's administration, BN will lose even more seats in the next general election.

"I urge the government to review the Printing Presses and Publications Act (PPPA) because there are too many conditions and bureaucracy being applied in the act," he noted.

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