Zunar defends 'PM weak' MH370 cartoon
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Political cartoonist Zunar has defended the publication of his controversial cartoon on the government's handling of the missing MH370 in the *Washington Post*.

Zunar, or Zulkiflee Anwar Haque, has been criticised for the cartoon in an article published by *The Star Online* today, which quotes academician Mohamed Mustafa Ishak describing the cartoon as "insensitive and misleading".

The cartoon was posted in the March 18 issue of *Washington Post*'s Comic Riffs section, with an accompanying **article by Michael Cavna** titled 'Cartoon of the Day: Malaysian artist on the lost jet - and his government's 'weak' response to it'.

Zunar said in a statement today said he understands the criticism made by Mustafa in defending Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

"However, Mustafa did not read enough before commenting.

"I made a conclusion and transformed my opinion through my cartoon, based on news reports and analyses not only by the local media but by dozens of international media outlets as well.

"In the cartoon, which was also published by *Malaysiakini* and in my **blog**, I made my point very clear: that the Malaysian government under Najib's leadership is weak in handling the MH370 matter," he added.

Mustafa in his **criticism** of Zunar, as *The Star Online* reported today, went on to say that Zunar's claim that Malaysia was hiding facts was preposterous.

Zunar said if the academician had read the article with the cartoon and followed CNN, *Al Jazeera*, *Washington Post*, *Jakarta Post* and *South China Morning Post*, he would certainly know that China, the United States and Vietnam are very upset with Malaysia's lack of information.

'No courage to face foreign journalists'

"Even Indonesia expressed its disappointment yesterday. Just a few hours ago, BBC reported that the relatives of the Chinese passengers on the missing flight have threatened a **hunger strike** if the Malaysian authorities fail to provide more accurate information.

"I am not suggesting that you have to believe all foreign media reports, but your judgment will be very shallow if you just read local mainstream newspapers!"

Zunar reaffirmed his opinion that Najib was "too weak" as a national leader compared with former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who would, in such a situation, address the

nation and give directions almost every day.

“Najib not only left the job to an 'incompetent' (acting Transport Minister) Hishammuddin Hussein, he also took seven days to open his mouth at a press conference. Yet, he did not have the courage to face foreign journalists, by refusing to take questions.”

As a cartoonist, he added, his job was to highlight different points of view, so that readers would be provided with better perspectives for healthy debate.

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