

Kadir: Why deny PM's brothers' right of reply?

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By not publishing a statement by the four brothers of Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak, the mainstream media has flouted a very basic rule of journalism, which is the right of reply.

Former New Straits Times group editor-in-chief A Kadir Jasin said the four brothers were merely replying to what had been published about their father in those very newspapers and elsewhere.

“It is clear that the mainstream media have not been practicing the right of reply,” he told Malaysiakini in response to a media blackout of the statement by Najib’s brothers.

In the statement, Nazir, Johari, Nizam, and Nazim Razak expressed concern over a Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) clarification to the New York Times (NYT) that Najib’s wealth came by their late father, Malaysia’s second prime minister Abdul Razak Hussein.

Kadir (right) said had the newspapers not published the PMO statement, they would not be obliged to publish the brothers’ response. The reverse however applied if they did carry the PMO’s statement.

“What’s important to note here is that there must be something terribly wrong with the PMO statement to prompt the brothers to not only distance themselves from the content of that statement, but to accuse it of tarnishing the image of their late father,” he said.

Kadir, however, did not want to speculate on whether the newspapers were pressured not to cover the brothers’ response.

Nazir mum on blackout

Meanwhile when contacted, Nazir declined to comment on the media blackout.

“Apologies, but I have no further comments to make on this matter,” he said in an email to Malaysiakini.

Nazir (left) was asked on lack of coverage of the brothers’ statement in the mainstream media and to clarify why Najib did not sign the statement along with his siblings.

Checks by Malaysiakini found that the Wednesday and Thursday print editions of major dailies Utusan Malaysia, Berita Harian, New Straits Times and The Star failed to report on the brothers’ response.

Interestingly, The Star’s online edition did publish a report on Tuesday night but the article

did not make it to the print version.

A Google search also identified a New Straits Times' online article on the statement two days ago. However, the article is no longer available online.

Family rift?

In the statement to NYT, the Razak brothers stated that their father was a highly-principled man known for his integrity.

"We take issue with anyone who taints his memory, whatever the motive. We would also like to add that our whole family is united on this issue," said the quartet minus Najib.

They were responding to PMO's justification of Najib and his wife Rosmah Mansor's lavish lifestyle as not unusual "... for a person of the prime minister's position, responsibilities and legacy (of) family assets".

The ensuing fallout has raised speculation of a rift between the four brothers and Rosmah.

On this alleged family split, Kadir said he did not know anything about it, as he was not privy to such information.