

**HRW: Stop crackdown on publications, dissent  
Malaysiakini.com  
July 19, 2010**

Stop harassing opposition and dissent, New York-based organisation Human Rights Watch (HRW) told the Home Ministry today.

In a statement, the group said the government should also repeal the Printing Presses and Publications Act 1984, which empowers the ministry to censor the content of publications.

suara keadilan report on felda bankrupt 220610"Malaysia's leaders hardly ever miss a chance to harass or shut down opposition papers by invoking national unity or public order, or claiming that official secrets are being revealed," said Phil Robertson, deputy Asia director at HRW.

"But letting political expediency trump the right to free expression insults all Malaysians who want a more open society, no matter their party affiliation."

HRW cited the indefinite suspension of PKR organ Suara Keadilan as well as the show cause letters issued to DAP and PAS for The Rocket and Harakah, respectively.

NONWhile Suara Keadilan got into hot soup for a report on alleged irregularities in land development agency Felda, DAP was queried as to why the English and Chinese-language editions of The Rocket continue being published although their permits have expired.

Harakah was questioned over its alleged failure to submit, as required by the ministry, eight copies of its fortnightly edition and for selling the newspaper to non-PAS members and outside the areas allowed.

While the PAS organ has been allowed to continue publishing, DAP has not received word regarding its permit while PKR's Suara Keadilan faces even greater uncertainty following its printing of documents the government said was classified.

All three parties, meanwhile, have resolved to cease publication of all of their newsletters.

azlanHRW also cited the warning issued to the editors of Malay rights group Perkasa's organ, Suara Perkasa, over a front-page report that called for Deputy Education Minister Wee Ka Siong to be detained under the Internal Security Act (ISA).

Citing premier Najib Abdul Razak's call on his first day as prime minister in April 2009 for a media "that is empowered to responsibly report what they see without fear of consequence", HRW said: "Newspapers should not have to answer to the government for what they are saying.

"It is for its own partisan political purposes that the Malaysian government tries to browbeat the opposition press into silence."

HRW went on to recount the arrest of PKR supreme council member Badrul Hisham Shahrin over a blog posting, the grilling of four journalists by the Securities Commission, the ban of Malaysiakini book '1Funny Malaysia', and the resignation of NTV7 producer Joshua Wong.

"The government uses every trick in the book to block news it doesn't want to reach the public," Robertson said.

"It's appalling that Malaysia, newly elected to the United Nations Human Rights Council, cannot seem to honor a bedrock human rights principle, the right to the free exchange of information and ideas."

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