

'Gov't cracking down on freedom of expression'
Malaysiakini.com
September 6, 2010

Human rights pressure group Suaram has decried the authorities' increasing attempts to curb freedom of expression.

NONE Suaram coordinator Hasbeemasputra Abu Bakar said there have been numerous examples of these in recent weeks, such as the suspension of 988 radio DJ Jamaluddin Ibrahim (left) and Sarawak Tribune editor Paul Si.

More recently, Hasbeemasputra cites the decision to charge blogger Irwan Abdul Rahman for posting a satire titled "TNB to sue WWF over Earth Hour" and is now liable to RM50,000 fine, up to a year in jail or both.

"(All this) points to a clear and continuing pattern of intimidation to curb freedom of expression and freedom of the press in Malaysia," said Hasbeemasputra.

Irwan was charged under Section 233 (1) (a) of the MCMC Act 1998 for "improper use of network facilities... by making... any content that is obscene, indecent, false, menacing or offensive, in characters with malicious intent".

Cloud over internet freedom

Commenting specifically on Irwan's case, Hasbeemasputra said the charge was "indeed frivolous" because a humorous piece of writing was being regarded as having "malicious intent", and thus should be dropped.

hishammuddin hussein ppsmi languages debate issue 260209 06In addition, Suaram also expressed concern over Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein's (right) announcement that a special task force would be set up to monitor online content that can cause "disunity and racial tension".

Hasbeemasputra said that the worry now was that the government was attempting to tighten its grip on the Internet.

"The setting up of this task force is also problematic as the record shows that the government's enforcement of issues of racism has always been lopsided, with Umno-linked personalities and organisations continuously allowed to make racist remarks freely and publicly without any repercussions or action by the authorities."

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.
Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/142086>