

Rais Calls For SOP On Overseas Humanitarian Mission
Bernama
September 5, 2011

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 5 (Bernama) -- A standard operating procedure (SOP) should be created to serve as a guideline for all parties, including media practitioners, before embarking on or taking part in any humanitarian mission abroad, said Information, Communications and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim.

Dr Rais said the time has come for the SOP to be put in place to prevent any untoward incident during such mission.

His call came following the shooting death of BernamaTV cameraman, Noramfaizul Mohd Nor, 39, in Mogadishu on Friday while covering a humanitarian mission in famine-stricken Somalia.

"Among other things, the situation where the mission is to be held should be assessed first, whether it is a disaster zone or a conflict zone.

"There should also be a reconnaissance done in these areas to determine the level of security," he said in an interview programme, "Kopi Panas", hosted by Zulkifli Bujang on TV1, today.

The programme also featured Putera 1Malaysia Club president, Datuk Abdul Azeez Abdul Rahim, who led the mission to Somalia.

It was also important to know what they should bring along when going to high risk areas, and to ensure each mission member was covered with special insurance protection, he said.

"The special insurance can provide assistance to the family should anything happen to any of the mission members," he added, stressing that all these should be taken into account to ensure mission members were well-prepared to face any eventuality.

He said the SOP should be discussed by the related parties including the legal fraternity, insurance industry and non-governmental organisations.

He also said that the tragic incident should not weaken the spirit of voluntarism among Malaysians, and expressed the hope that charity works, including those by Putera 1Malaysia Club, would not be undermined by what he described as non-constructive criticisms.

To a question, Rais said the mission had achieved its objective in terms of providing assistance to Somali families who were displaced by draught and famine.

On the training for the media prior to taking part in aid missions, Rais said, it could be carried out by the Tun Abdul Razak Institute for Broadcasting and Information (IPPTAR) or the volunteers who had previously taken part in such missions.

"Datuk Abdul Azeez Abdul Rahim himself can share his experience on how to face risks in critical zones," he said.

On the publication of a picture of Noramfaizul, showing him in coma with the gunshot wound in the shoulder, Rais said, it should not have been published as it touched on the

sensitivity of late cameraman's family.

---BERNAMA

Copyright © 2011 BERNAMA

Source: <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/newsindex.php?id=611537>