

**Amendment To Evidence Act To Protect People - Najib  
Bernama  
September 12, 2012**

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 12 (Bernama) -- The Evidence Act amendment is a modern and forward-looking legislation aimed at protecting the people from Internet-based crimes such as cyber bullying, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said Wednesday.

"As a government, it is our responsibility to ask: how do we ensure that online reporting is responsible? How do we ensure that people do not become the victims of intimidation and cyber-bullying? How do we ensure that freedom co-exists with respect?

"It was with these questions in mind that we amended the Evidence Act. Perhaps it wasn't explained clearly enough what this meant for web-users in Malaysia. And I believe that it is a modern and forward-looking piece of legislation," he said at the National Press Club (NPC) Awards 2012 here.

Also present were the prime minister's wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor and NPC president Mokhtar Hussain.

The amendments to the Evidence Act 1950, including the introduction of Section 114A, became controversial especially in cyberspace when it was gazetted on June 31.

Section 114A was argued to be lopsided as it can liberally bring to court those who publish and replicate or post seditious and defamatory contents in the Internet regardless of whether or not the material originated from them.

Najib also said if Malaysia was to build a democracy that was truly responsive to the needs of all the people and not just some of them, it was important to empower the media both old and new, to responsibly report what they see.

"I have always said that I want the online space to be vibrant, just as I want a traditional media that is free, transparent and fair. And earlier this year we introduced the Printing Presses and Publications Bill to further liberalise the media," he said.

Whatever the medium, he said, the best journalism was bold, inquisitive and accountable; fearless in spirit and open in practice.

"It is an irreplaceable element of modern democracy. That is the kind of journalism that we wish to encourage, and which we are gathered here tonight to celebrate," he said.

Najib pointed out that one of the greatest achievements of this generation was where information could be shared freely across the world, either with friends, families, even with strangers.

"But while this changing landscape is both exhilarating and liberating, with it comes new ethical questions. Traditional media is governed by codes of conduct, both formal and informal.

"I know that all of you here instinctively understand the responsibility to report what you see accurately, and to inform your audience without prejudice.

"However, online users can deploy "guerrilla tactics" to misinform, slander or harass - and can do so under the cloak of anonymity," he said.

Najib also congratulated tonight's winners and said that each and everyone in the media industry had made the Malaysian media as it is today.

"You conscientiously report the truth, bringing insight and illumination to the public - helping Malaysia on its path to becoming a developed nation," he said.

-- BERNAMA

Copyright © 2012 BERNAMA

Source: <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v6/newsindex.php?id=694228>