

Suaram wants TMI unblocked, probe on editors called off
Malay Mail Online
February 28, 2016

Users of several local Internet service providers have not been able to access The Malaysian Insider's website since Thursday.

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 28 — Suara Rakyat Malaysia (Suaram) today urged the authorities to immediately allow access on all networks to the website of *The Malaysian Insider* (TMI) and to stop investigating the news portal's editors under Section 124I of the Penal Code.

Failure to do so would tarnish Malaysia's international image, it said.

The rights group said in the first place, the block should not have been an arbitrary decision by the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) and should have only been ordered after a thorough and transparent investigation against the news portal had been conducted.

"The swiftness in which the MCMC took action and blocked *The Malaysian Insider* website implies that MCMC did not conduct any investigation into the matter and made an arbitrary decision to block *The Malaysian Insider*," Suaram said in a statement here.

It added that Section 124I of the Penal Code, which covers dissemination of false reports that may cause public alarm, should not be used to suppress the media.

In TMI's case, Suaram said the use of the law can be seen as an act of intimidation against the local media.

If the allegations reported by TMI were false as claimed by MCMC, Suaram said the aggrieved parties should take action against the news portal, and not the Malaysian government.

"On this note, Suaram calls for the unblocking of *The Malaysian Insider* and demand that investigations under Section 124I be stopped immediately!" it said.

"Considering the standing of Malaysia as a member of the United Nations Security Council and the upcoming Human Rights Council sitting in which Malaysia would undoubtedly be under scrutiny, the Government of Malaysia must take proactive steps to fulfil its international obligations and maintain a positive image in the international community," it added.

On Friday, police questioned five members of TMI's editorial staff under Section 124I of the Penal Code, Section 8 (a) of the Printing Presses and Publications Act 1984, and Section 233 of the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998.

Section 124I covers dissemination of false reports that may cause public alarm, while Section 8A of the PPPA covers the publication of false news. Section 233 of the CMA pertains to improper use of network service and facilities.

Users of several local Internet service providers have not been able to access *The Malaysian Insider's* website since Thursday. Its alternative web address themalaysianoutsider.com later met the same fate.

Communications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Seri Dr Salleh Said Keruak said access was blocked because the news portal had published a “confusing” report citing an anonymous source that contradicted official statements by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC).

Copyright © 2016 Malay Mail Online

Sources: <http://www.themalaymailonline.com/malaysia/article/suaram-wants-tmi-unblocked-probe-on-editors-called-off>