

**MEDIA STATEMENT**  
**8 November 2023**

**CIJ's Response To The Revocation of Harakah's Media Passes**

The Centre for Independent Journalism (CIJ) has serious concerns on [the issue of ethical reporting and related actions of the Information Department to revoke the media passes of Harakah and Harakah Daily.](#)

**Upholding international standards and due process of justice**

It is of grave concern that there is no transparency and clarity on the process of how the decision was made. It was reported that the Information Department had taken the unilateral decision to revoke the media passes without prior warning. It is unclear if the Harakah media group was given the opportunity to present their case; take any corrective actions such as removing the impugned content; or on how they can access their right to appeal this decision.

CIJ's concerns are amplified by the Information Department's failure to provide any clear and specific reasons for its decision. The department's vague statement that the publications had "gone against journalism ethics" does not meet the acceptable standards of natural justice and due process.

We reiterate our call for the government to be more transparent about the processes and mechanisms of how decisions are made, especially when it relates to restricting media access. The government must uphold international standards of legitimacy, necessity and proportionality in its decision to restrict or censor the media.

Failure to uphold international standards and due process raises serious questions about the government's commitment to media freedom and freedom of expression.

**Ethical and responsible reporting**

While we demand for the protection of the rights and guarantee of an independent and enabling environment for media it is also the responsibility of media to contribute to the strengthening of peace, democracy and respect of the rights of all, as well as to counter racism, radicalism, disinformation and hate speech, amongst others, in carrying out their role as the fourth estate.

In this regard, it is incumbent on Harakah to avoid sensationalism and clickbaits, and to focus instead on high ethical standards of journalism based on principles of truth and accuracy, fairness and impartiality, humanity and accountability. Media, regardless of its partisan nature, should uphold these principles, and critically so on matters of public interest by being factual, accurate and reliable.

### **Expedite the establishment of the Malaysian Media Council**

As such, CIJ urges the government to expedite the establishment of the Malaysian Media Council, a transparent, self-regulatory body for the industry. It is imperative that no government representatives sit in the decision making body of the Media Council in order to promote its independence and gain the trust of the public. We have made this call on numerous occasions as it ensures the government does not remain the sole arbiter of the truth and prevents the censorship of the media by actors with political expediency. It prevents issues like this from occurring as it provides a legitimate space for consultation and deliberation.

In this case, a Media Council would have been in a better position to deliberate on this issue and provide the necessary mechanism in reviewing and resolving the dispute in an impartial, independent and transparent manner placing ethical reporting and due process at the center of the matter.

CIJ hopes to see a commitment from the government and the media in enshrining press freedom and preserving the media in its role as the fourth estate. The freedom of the media is an extension of the freedom of expression which is the right bestowed upon every person.

**8 November 2023**

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*The Centre for Independent Journalism is a non-profit organisation that aspires for a society that is democratic, just and free where all peoples will enjoy free media and the freedom to express, seek and impart information.*