

JOINT STATEMENT
15 July 2025

Call for Independent MMC With the Interest of the Public at Its Centre

CIJ and GERAMM wishes to commend and congratulate the [formal appointment of the founding board members of the Malaysian Media Council](#) (MMC). This serves as a milestone towards achieving an independent, multi-stakeholder regulatory and accountable media ecosystem. In establishing this institution, we hope to be one step closer to attaining a media ecosystem that has the interests of the public at its heart.

Malaysia's media landscape has faced issues such as self-censorship, the spread of disinformation and hate speech, reporting influenced by racism, bigotry, misogyny or xenophobia, and the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and emerging technologies to maximise profit and economic viability. To enhance confidence in the media and strengthen the information and freedom of expression ecosystem, the MMC should focus on these priorities as it develops its foundations.

Firstly, we highlight the importance of addressing concerns about having government representatives on the MMC Board, as this could affect the independence that is central to a self-regulatory body. The Minister of Communications has stated that the [two government representatives would be individuals from within or familiar with the media industry](#).

While we welcome this assurance as a sign of the government's commitment to supporting media independence, their inclusion also reflects the range of interests involved in establishing the MMC. CIJ therefore emphasises that the MMC must remain independent and focused on serving the public interest, without being influenced by business or political considerations.

Secondly, given ongoing concerns about unethical practices in Malaysia's media ecosystem, the MMC should establish an authoritative code of conduct for journalists that promotes adherence to the highest professional standards. Coupled with a clear grievance and dispute resolution mechanism, this would help empower journalists and media practitioners to work freely while upholding journalistic integrity. The MMC should demonstrate its credibility as a fair and effective regulator of the media.

In addition, the MMC should prioritise fostering a sustainable environment for the welfare of media workers. The local media industry faces significant economic challenges, including increasing retrenchments and downsizing that raise concerns about job security, delayed salaries, and working conditions. The MMC should work to hold media owners accountable for fair labour practices and protect journalists' rights so they can fulfil their role of informing the public without fear.

Lastly, to ensure that this is not just a symbolic gesture to appease the media and the public, the MMC must work towards making substantive legal and institutional reform.

It must pressure government to commit to repealing oppressive laws such as the Printing Presses and Publications Act (PPPA) 1984, Sedition Act 1948, Official Secrets Act 1972, Section 211 and Section 233 of the Communications and Multimedia Act (CMA) 1998, Section 114A of the Evidence Act 1950, and Section 203A, Section 499 and Section 500 of the Penal Code (criminal defamation) as well as amend other laws like the Whistleblower Protection Act 2010. Without simultaneous and immediate legal reforms, the effectiveness of the MMC will be undermined and the MMC is likely to become another ineffective institution in Malaysia.

As CIJ and GERAMM have long contributed to the enactment of the MMC, we will continue monitoring to ensure its success according to its mandate together with our civil society partners. We hope that the MMC will engage with us through an ongoing, structured consultation and ongoing process. As our support continues, we urge all media organisations to join the MMC and all stakeholders ranging from policymakers, media, civil society and the public stand together to preserve the integrity of the media as the fourth estate, collectively.

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