

PRESS STATEMENT

28 April 2026

CIJ is Alarmed by the Raid of the Home of a Journalist and Calls on the Government to Cease all Intimidation and Harassment of Investigative Journalists

Following the recent [raid of the home of Malaysiakini journalist B Nantha Kumar](#) yesterday, the Centre for Independent Journalism (CIJ) calls for the authorities to cease all forms of intimidation on journalists carrying out their duty to report on public interest matters.

According to media reports, investigations have been launched against Nantha Kumar under Section 203A of the Penal Code (*unauthorised disclosure of information*) and Section 233 of the Communications and Multimedia Act (*improper use of network facilities or services to make, create, solicit, or transmit communications that are obscene, indecent, false, menacing, or grossly offensive with the intent to annoy, abuse, threaten, or harass another individual*) in regards to an article published on 27 March 2026 on the proposed migrant worker digital recruitment system.

Yesterday, the police searched Nantha's home for copies of official documents that could serve as evidence in their investigation. It was reported that Nantha was issued a warrant for the search of his home for copies of alleged official documents, including a cabinet memorandum titled *'Proposal for the Implementation of the Digital System The Universal Recruitment Advanced Platform (TURAP) in the Process of Recruiting Foreign Workers to Malaysia'*.

CIJ notes with alarm this escalating practice of using the law to intimidate and harass journalists conducting their investigative duties, leading to a culture of fear and inhibiting the progress of investigative journalism on matters of public interest in Malaysia. The raid strikes at the core of free press and democratic accountability, and sends a threatening message to journalists reporting on sensitive issues linked to possible corruption or corporate malpractices. A search warrant and raid of the journalists home threatens source confidentiality and is a potential abuse of power as it can be used as a 'fishing expedient' to access other information, including communications logs, devices, contact lists, raw research and other notes or information. This breach of privacy and safety would threaten the very existence of investigative journalism.

The weaponisation of both these regressive laws to conduct this investigation reflects a wider issue in Malaysia that pushes aside the public interest in favour of meeting the agenda of said government of the day. The issue of the public interest should always guide legal decision-making powers. A prerequisite for any investigative journalism is access to information held by public bodies, and any non-disclosure must be guided by international standards and be based on limited exemption grounds. As Malaysia moves towards enacting a Freedom of Information Act, it must practice open and maximum disclosure of information, and any

non-disclosure must meet the 'harm test' and 'public interest test' to foster accountability, informing the public about operations of the public authorities or bodies, and revealing possible misconduct or negligence.

We therefore urge the authorities to **cease investigations against B Nantha Kumar** related to his journalistic work on this matter. The authorities should respect and allow the Malaysian Media Council to enforce its mandate to ensure that the media remains accountable and independent through its Code of Conduct for journalists. Any complaints of alleged misconduct by a journalist or media company can be determined through the Media Council's grievance mechanism.

Allowing the mandate of the Malaysian Media Council to function would ensure international standards of proportionality, necessity and legitimacy whilst protecting the rights of individuals and journalists during investigations, including the right to legal counsel and the right to remain silent to safeguard themselves or their sources of information.

Let legitimate media perform its duties as the fourth estate and allow journalists to do their work without fearing the constant threat of legal action.

28 April 2026

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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.