

## CIJ, WAMI: Lift ban on cartoons, repeal PPPA

Tuesday, 29 June 2010

The Centre for Independent Journalism (CIJ) and Writers' Alliance for Media Independence (WAMI) condemn the Ministry of Home Affairs' banning of "1Funny Malaysia", "Perak Darul Kartun" dan "Isu Dalam Kartun", all cartoon compilations by Zulkifli Anwar Ulhaque, better known as Zunar

According to online daily "Malaysiakini", whose subsidiary Kinibooks is the publisher of "1Funny Malaysia", the Ministry's secretary-general Mahmood Adam justified the ban thus: "All three publications have been banned for...contents that can influence the people to revolt against the leaders and government policies. The contents are not suitable and [are] detrimental to public order." The report did not state when the ban was imposed, merely quoting the official as saying so on 24 June.

CIJ and WAMI hold that no books should be banned to prevent the circulation of ideas, and that the people should be free to seek and receive them. However, we are particularly appalled by the rationale for the ban, which revealed flagrant partisanship of the civil service toward the government of the day. The civil service, by name and mandate, is supposed to be above politics and serve the public, which includes protecting the people's right to express what they think of the elected government. The Ministry is being nonsensical to link criticism of the ruling government with public disorder, when the former is a hallmark of a functioning democracy.

The Ministry also resorted to the undemocratic measure of confiscating the books for "study" in January this year and August last year, a move which has intimidated retailers from selling them.

We call for an immediate lift of the ban and the repeal of the Printing Presses and Publications Act under which the ban is being imposed. Once again, the law is being abused by the state as a political tool for hegemonic purposes rather than to maintain social order.

Issued by

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(Chinese language translation)

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