

# **PR ACT EMPOWERS PRESS FREEDOM - HAMDAN**

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**Kota Kinabalu:** The Government has no intention to control press freedom in the country with the proposed formulation of a Public Relations Act, said Malaysia Public Relations Institution (IPRM) President Prof. Dato' Mohd Hamdan Adnan.

He said the proposed Act would empower the media and enhance its credibility in the nation as well as gives recognition to media practitioners.

"It is not the main objective of the proposed Act to have power over the media and control its freedom. In fact, it is aimed to give government recognition and accreditation to the public relations professions including media practitioners, which is similarly done with other professions like lawyers, accountants and nurses, among others.



Hamdan assures that the PR Act would not curtail media freedom. Instead it will enhance it.

**"We also want the media to report only the truth and not lies or propaganda to mislead the public. I also believe controlling the media too much will bring the media industry down as it will lose the people's trust and confidence in them.**

**"As a result, many will look for other means to read news like in the blogs, other portals and other types of newspapers," he said when answering a question from a public relations officer from the Home Ministry Sabah branch here during a dialogue session.**

**Hamdan said this in a luncheon talk to explain the objectives and benefits of the proposed PR Act to public relations practitioners and the public at the Information Department here, Monday.**

**The talk was officiated at by deputy director-general of Strategic Information of National Information Department, Datuk Poziah Haji Abdul Rahman.**

**Also present were Information Department director for media and corporate communications, Haji Ramli Yusoff, Sabah Information Department Director, Azizan Haji Din, district information officers and public relations officers of government departments and private sector.**

**Meanwhile, Ramli said the proposed Act could also include provisions or regulations that could smoothen the work of media practitioners.**

**For example, he said photographers can give suggestions on the distance that will enable them to take good shots or pictures of the very, very important people (VVIP) like the Yang Dipertuan**

**Agung and other royal dignitaries, among others at official functions.**



**Hamdan, Datuk Poziah & Haji Ramli briefing PR practitioners**

**In addition, Ramli said having the Act in the nation would provide funding to the Information Department to conduct relevant courses that could train amateurs in the industry and enhance the work and expertise of the public relations professions.**

**He said it will ensure those practicing public relations would know what to do in their work. For example, he said those who have been trained in public relations would know how to deal with the media, produce news releases and organise press conferences for the media.**

**According to Hamdan, the proposed Act will make the public relations professions have a recognised credibility, trust and code of ethics to follow.**

**"Through passing of the Act, public relations professions would be empowered and will able to complete globally in the industry.**

There will be a conduct of practice and requirements to comply with in order to be given such accreditation.

"It will also ensure that those who claim they are public relations practitioners have proper qualification and experiences to do tasks that are required by public or private sectors," he said.

Hamdan said IPRM also feels that there is a need for the nation to have the proposed Act so that the image of the public relations profession is uplifted and respected by the people.

Even an international body of public relations, Global Alliance, he said, is supportive and proud that the Malaysian government wants to have its own Act to regulate the industry as there are only five countries in the world that have similar laws like Britain.

At a press conference, Hamdan said there is a tentative draft for the proposed Act that needs public feedback and suggestions especially from public relations practitioners in the country.

He said they could read the draft in the IPRM website, [bmkk@inform.gov.my](mailto:bmkk@inform.gov.my) or bmkk facebook and give their views and suggestions to the government to look into and consider in the formulation of the proposed Act.

"IPRM and the Information Department are directed by Information, Communications, Arts and Culture Minister Dato' Seri Utama Dr. Rais Yatim to conduct a roadshow in the country to check on the number of

public relations practitioners and to get their views on the proposed Act.

"The Minister wants to assure that the people of Malaysia support the formulation of the proposed Act. I am optimistic there is not much objection from Sabahans and Sarawakians except in Kuala Lumpur (KL).

We are starting the roadshow first in Sabah now and followed by other states.

"According to Datuk Poziah, there are many international public relations agencies in KL and some of them are not in favour of the proposed Act which they believe will hamper them in their practice in the country," he said.

Towards this end Hamdan said the proposed Act will not prevent anyone from practising their public relations expertise in Malaysia.

After getting the feedback, he said they would bring the proposed Act to Parliament and that it would take one to two years for the Act to be materialise.