

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/malaysia-blogger-faces-trial-for-malicious-08-09-2010,38314.html>

Asia - Malaysia

Charges dropped

Prosecutors withdraw charges against satirical blogger

16 March 2011

Charges against satirical [blogger Irwan Abdul Raman](#), who blogs under the name of **Hassan Skodeng**, were dropped at a hearing today in Petaling Jaya at the request of the attorney-general's office

Irwan had been facing a possible one-year jail sentence and fine of 12,500 euros for posting a humorous blog last year about a fictional news conference at which Malaysia's largest power company criticised a global energy-saving campaign. Irwan thanked all the bloggers who had given him their support.

The presiding judge granted a request by Irwan's lawyer, Datuk Jahaberdeen Mohamed Yunoos, for the return of the 1,300 dollars bail that was deposited on Irwan's when the charges were brought against him last September.

Jahaberdeen said he was happy with the outcome of today's hearing. "This shows that Malaysians are waking up to taking life less seriously and in a lighter way," he said. "Hopefully, this result will not kill satirical talent in the country."

The attorney-general's office told Jahaberdeen in letter on 22 February that he intended to withdraw the charges. Irwan works for [The Malay Mail](#) website.

Blogger faces trial for malicious intent over satirical article 08 September 2010

Reporters Without Borders today condemned as senseless a charge laid against **Irwan Abdul Raman**, better known as Hassan Skodeng, for posting a satirical article on his blog <http://nose4news.wordpress.com/> about the state-owned energy company Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB).

Raman faces up to one year in prison and a fine of 50,000 ringgits (12,500 euros). The worldwide press freedom organisation called for charges against Raman to be dropped, deploring the judicial harassment against him and defending a blogger's right to humour. "The authorities should not confuse satire with defamation", it said.

Irwan Abdul Raman was charged on 2 September by the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) for his post on 25 March this year headlined "TNB to sue WWF over Earth Hour". The satirical report falsely claimed that Malaysia's biggest energy company was planning to sue the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) over its Earth Hour demonstration against global warming.

Raman has been charged under Article 233 (1) (a) of the 1998 Communications and Multimedia law for "improper use of network facilities or network service by making, creating, soliciting and initiating transmission of any content that is obscene, indecent, false, menacing or offensive in

character with malicious intent.”

The blogger has taken down the post but pleaded not guilty. The Malaysian opposition called the trial ridiculous.

Several bloggers faced charges in 2009 including **Khairul Nizam Abd Ghani** and **Badrul Hisham Shaharin** who were arrested during a demonstration against Malaysia's Internal Security Act (<http://en.rsf.org/malaysia-campaign-for-internal-security-act-30-07-2010,38067.html>) for their posted comments and articles.

Reporters Without Borders included Malaysia among countries to be kept under surveillance in its most recent report on free expression online released on 12 March 2010 (<http://en.rsf.org/surveillance-malaysia,36670.html>).

Reporters Without Borders condemns the government pressure that led the owners of Chinese-language radio station 98.8 FM to fire its manager and a presenter for interviewing politicians about racial discrimination. “The company told us we violated licence conditions regarding race, religion and morality,” talk-show host **Jamaluddin Ibrahim** told Agence France-Presse. The Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission sent the station's owners a letter on 18 August complaining about the content of Ibrahim's programme.

In July, the government suspended the distribution of three opposition newspapers and restricted the distribution of a fourth: <http://en.rsf.org/malaysia-constant-harassment-of-opposition-16-07-2010,37965.html>
