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<http://www.rsf.org/malaysia-prime-minister-sues-online-04-06-2014,46395.html>

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Asia - Malaysia

Libel suit

## Prime minister sues online newspaper over readers' comments

4 June 2014

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Prime Minister Najib Razak filed a libel suit yesterday against the online newspaper *Malaysiakini* over comments critical of him and his party that readers posted on its website. [His lawyers had threatened to sue](#) in a letter to the newspaper on 15 May.

*"We regret that the prime minister has opted for legal action instead of using his right of reply,"* said Benjamin Ismaïl, the head of the Reporters Without Borders Asia-Pacific desk.

*"This libel action is disastrous for freedom of information in Malaysia because it means that any news outlet can be sued whenever it allow its readers to express their views. We urge the prime minister to reverse course and let people criticize him."*

*Malaysiakini* editor **Steven Gan** said: "We intend to fight the suit vigorously." Known for its independence and frequent criticism of the prime minister's party, which has held power for years, *Malaysiakini* is also currently being sued by other politicians and businessmen in connection of its coverage of various scandals.

A court hearing to be attended by lawyers representing the prime minister and *Malaysiakini* has been set for 18 June.

Malaysia is ranked 147th out of 180 countries in the 2014 Reporters Without Borders [press freedom index](#).

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