



PRESS STATEMENT

KUALA LUMPUR (17 FEBRUARY 2021) - The Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) expresses its concerns regarding the recent news reports on the alleged use of certain dating website by students of higher education to obtain financial support in exchange for their companionship.

It was reported that there has been an increase of over 40% in the registration of new users on such dating website seemingly due to financial pressures during COVID-19 pandemic. These dating websites or other similar online dating applications may promote sexual exploitation activities which violate the principle of human rights.

This situation is very worrying and if there is no proper monitoring mechanism by the authorities, it may lead to negative impacts on our younger generation. SUHAKAM is of the view that the younger generation, regardless of their gender should be provided with sufficient assistance and support to allow them to develop their personal potential, be it in their studies or professional life. In this regard, SUHAKAM calls upon the relevant authorities to work together with expert bodies and organisations to study the root causes for the prevalence of such practices, with a view to identifying and implementing measures to effectively address the matter.

SUHAKAM calls for the relevant Ministries such as the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MWFC) and the Ministry of Communications and Multimedia to conduct regular monitoring of online dating websites and other similar applications. There should be a balance between right to information and internet censorship in controlling what can be accessed, published, or viewed on the website especially when it involves younger generation and children.

SUHAKAM also wishes to remind parents and guardians to always monitor their children's internet activities in order to protect them from accessing sexually-explicit websites that could potentially be detrimental to their safety and well-being.

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Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)

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