



**MEDIA STATEMENT
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION OF MALAYSIA (SUHAKAM)**

EDITOR, NEWS DESK

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS STATEMENT

KUALA LUMPUR (30 JUNE 2021) - The Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) is alarmed with the rise of suicide and attempted suicides, which seem to coincide with the COVID-19 pandemic since early last year. The pandemic has taken a toll on the physical wellbeing and mental health of many people, particularly those who experienced sudden loss of income. There are many risk factors which may lead to suicidal thoughts and suicides including medical, psychosocial or financial distress, which are further compounded by social isolation, the lack of family support or inability to access counselling or mental health services.

Often, suicides in Malaysia are recorded as "accidental death" rather than "suicide", whereby psycho-social support, which would otherwise be provided to the suicide victim's family, is not adequately rendered and may risk another member developing suicidal thoughts. Whilst the manifestation of suicides is often attributed to mental health reasons, societal and communal roles should also be considered in efforts to address this public health issue.

From a rights perspective, it is SUHAKAM's view that health services especially mental health support must be made available to those in need, especially anyone who may be having suicidal thoughts. Equal access to timely and appropriate care and assistance should be provided to those who are most vulnerable, including children, the poor, downtrodden and marginalised, as that would be afforded to the general Malaysian society. Information on early signs of mental health problems and access to mental health care and support ought to be disseminated, while stigma against those with mental health problems should be recognized and banished, once and for all.

SUHAKAM calls for a revival of the establishment of the National Suicide Registry Malaysia (NSRM), which was initiated in 2007 to provide the public with access to data on suicides in the country. Quality data collection system that includes age, gender, ethnicity, state, and the manner in which the suicide is carried out, will facilitate the development of effective policies and long-term solutions in preventing suicides in the society.

In the interest of reducing socioeconomic pressures on the society during the COVID-19 pandemic, SUHAKAM calls for expedient vaccination rollout, expansion of voluntary testing and early detection, and targeted movement control orders. This will allow for more sectors of the society to regain access to work and livelihoods, resumption of schools and return to some normalcy in their lives, and possibly to a reduction in the incidence of suicides.

"Human Rights For All"

For enquiries contact the Commission's front desk on 03-2612 5600



**MEDIA STATEMENT
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION OF MALAYSIA (SUHAKAM)**

In line with the Government's commitment to meet Goal 3 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which is to "Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages", Government Ministries, agencies, NGOs/CSOs and members of the society at large, have respective and vital roles to play in overcoming or reducing the occurrence of suicides, overall.

-END-

Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)

30 June 2021

Media queries: Contact Mrs. Norashikin Hamzah at 03-2612 5687 / 019-621 5336 or shikin@suhakam.org.my