



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

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS STATEMENT

KUALA LUMPUR (8 AUGUST 2021) - The Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) is concerned over the incidents of intimidation and reprisals against human rights defenders who were present at the recent 'Keluar dan #Lawan' assembly including youth activists, lawyers, media professionals, as well as SUHAKAM's Commissioners.

SUHAKAM reiterates its position as a body corporate established by its enabling Act, the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia Act 1999, as well as an 'A' status National Human Rights Institution. In order to discharge its functions, SUHAKAM is mandated under its enabling Act, to exercise any or all of its powers including to undertake any appropriate activities as are necessary which includes to monitor the human rights situation in the country. In this context, SUHAKAM was present at the recent 'Keluar dan #Lawan' assembly on 31 July 2021, in line with its function to monitor public assemblies.

SUHAKAM expresses its disappointment that its Commissioners have been summoned for questioning by the police for merely discharging its duties as mandated under its enabling Act. Since the inception of SUHAKAM, its Commissioners or officers have never been summoned for questioning for monitoring any event. SUHAKAM believes the actions by the police to investigate SUHAKAM's Commissioners and other human rights defenders, including the representatives of the Malaysian Bar Council, for monitoring a peaceful assembly are a regressive move and against the very spirit of the Peaceful Assembly Act 2012 and the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, that has been adopted by UN Member States, including Malaysia.

The principles of freedom of expression is the right of all Malaysians, in compliance with a number of international human rights standards on freedom of assembly, and is constitutionally protected in Article 10 of the Federal Constitution as well as Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The authorities are obligated to respect and allow, even facilitate, peaceful assemblies to take place safely and smoothly.

SUHAKAM is encouraged by the continued commitment of all human rights defenders in the country, for their resilience and determination towards safeguarding human rights principles at all times, notwithstanding the challenges faced. SUHAKAM reiterates that anyone who expresses his or her views on human rights should not suffer from fear of intimidation and reprisal. As we progress, the voices of people all over the world calling out for their rights to live as equal, with dignity and respect, must be heeded.

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**Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)
8 August 2021**

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"Human Rights For All"

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