



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

EDITOR, NEWS DESK

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS STATEMENT

KUALA LUMPUR (25 SEPTEMBER 2021) - The Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) credits the Government for the overall successful execution of the National COVID-19 Immunisation Programme (PICK), despite some issues faced at the onset. The COVID-19 Immunisation Task Force (CITF), on 21 September 2021, reported that 80.2 % of the adult population in Malaysia had been fully vaccinated, and SUHAKAM wishes to congratulate those who made the decision to be vaccinated.

SUHAKAM supports the goal of PICK to achieve herd immunity in the fastest possible time, however, the Government should respect every person's right to self-determination and the freedom to refuse vaccination due to various reasons. Efforts should be intensified to encourage those medically eligible to get the COVID-19 vaccination through continuous engagement with the communities, to promote the benefits of vaccinations, backed by scientific evidence and to dispel any doubts or misinformation abound.

SUHAKAM have received a number of complaints on allegations of discrimination due to restrictions imposed on those who remain unvaccinated, including persons who were not allowed to get back to work or compelled to pay for their own tests, or movement restrictions in entering premises for the general public. SUHAKAM reminds employers to avoid imposing mandatory vaccination requirements for their employees or from penalising employees who refused to be vaccinated, instead employers may provide incentives to encourage their employees to be vaccinated. SUHAKAM calls for the Government to take immediate actions to address such issues by having a balanced approach between public health priorities and the right to be treated fairly without discrimination. Additionally the Government could look into the possibility of expanding the role and function of the Pusat Mediasi COVID-19 (PMC-19), to include assistance for employees who are disputing issues related to COVID-19, including their vaccination status, with their employers.

SUHAKAM welcomes recent announcements to permit individuals who have completed their vaccinations some freedom to access various venues, to dine in, and undertake domestic travel bubbles, among others. In order to curb the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, Government or owners of premises may, impose certain restrictions upon those who have yet to complete their vaccination or chose not to be vaccinated. The public should realize that these steps are mainly to protect human and public health, which may also serve as an incentive for people to obtain vaccinations. Such restrictions, however, should not hinder anyone from enjoying their basic human rights including access to education, food and medical treatments, among others; and only be enforced as a temporary measure, until such time herd immunity has been achieved or when the Pandemic transitions to an endemic phase.

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Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)

25 September 2021

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