



PRESS STATEMENT

KUALA LUMPUR (30 NOVEMBER 2022) - The Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) welcomes the recent initiative by the Sabah State Government to set up a temporary shelter and provide basic living skill training for homeless children mostly from the Pala'u community in Kota Kinabalu, which the operation is expected to start by the end of this year.

As part of SUHAKAM's mandate enshrined in Article 4 of the SUHAKAM Act 1999 to protect and promote human rights in Malaysia, SUHAKAM has already been looking into issues of statelessness for many years. Part of our initiative includes signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Commission on Human Rights of Indonesia (KOMNASHAM) and the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines (CHRP) on improving the lives of the Sabah stateless population.

Statelessness particularly has adverse impact on children. Undocumented children always suffer from discrimination and on some occasions, are denied basic rights as they are unable to access formal education, and medical care and they are at higher risk of child labour and human trafficking. They may also be at risk of being arrested or detained by the authorities, especially if they are seen begging or loitering in public areas. In line with Article 2 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) which Malaysia is a signatory to, children are protected from any discrimination under the responsibility of the State. The State also has the obligation to protect a child's rights to name and identity as mentioned in Article 7 and 8 of the CRC.

The Second Schedule of the Federal Constitution of Malaysia contains a strong legal safeguard against statelessness and with this initiative, SUHAKAM hopes Malaysia is moving towards intensifying its effort in reducing or ending statelessness of children. SUHAKAM will continue to advise, monitor, and work with the Government to achieve greater complaints resolution rate in particular on the issues related to the statelessness in Sabah

Prof. Dato' Dr. Rahmat Mohamad
Chairman
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