



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

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS STATEMENT

JEDDAH, KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA (30 NOVEMBER 2023) - The Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) participated in the 22nd Regular Session of the Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC) of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) held in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from 26-30 November 2023. The session was attended by various stakeholders including IPHRC members, experts from international organizations, representatives of OIC Member and Observer States including their respective National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs).

A thematic debate on ‘Elimination of Racial Discrimination: An Islamic and Human Rights Perspective’ was jointly organized by OIC-IPHRC in collaboration with the Saudi Human Rights Commission (SHRC) during the Session to discuss on measures to be taken to address the growing scourge of discrimination, including racial discrimination and its various contemporary manifestations. SUHAKAM, represented by Commissioner Puan Nazira Abdul Rahim delivered an intervention statement.

“Racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia have no place in any society and the failure to tackle this issue may lead to a more violent situation as is currently happening in Palestine. Implied acceptance and condonation of powerful Nations to the practice of apartheid, illegal occupation, denial of basic human needs and collective punishment against Palestinian civilians, half of them children, is condemned by SUHAKAM. Indeed, the violence that has led to the loss of life, annihilation of whole families would only cause despair and trauma that will last forever. The acts of terror, the killings, destroying public infrastructure including health facilities inside Gaza, residential buildings and places of worship are serious violations of the laws and customs applicable in international armed conflict, within the established framework of international law”.

The key recommendations of the debate will be finalized by the SHRC and to be consolidated into an outcome document to encourage dialogue and sharing of best practices in combating racial discrimination. It is crucial to foster a culture of tolerance, equality and non-discrimination towards developing a just, peaceful and sustainable society in the future and in achieving this, the enactment of relevant laws that focus on improving, safeguarding and encouraging beneficial race/ethnic relations should be in place. The execution of these laws should be effectively monitored in order to promote national harmony, unity, reconciliation, integration and non-discrimination in the society. In view of this and the launch of the National Unity Action Plan 2021-2030 in 2021, SUHAKAM calls for the Government to re-visit the decision to discontinue the National Harmony and Reconciliation Commission Bill.

In embracing the spirit of Article 8 of the Federal Constitution as the cornerstone of constitutional protection of equality and non-discrimination, SUHAKAM calls for all parties to be at the forefront in combating racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia in Malaysia. SUHAKAM will continue to engage OIC-IPHRC and other relevant stakeholders to organise awareness activities, consultations and programmes to address growing issues of racism discrimination, racism and xenophobia.

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**Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)
30 November 2023**