

EDITOR, NEWS DESK

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**SUHAKAM CALLS FOR STRONGER REGIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY: ASEAN MUST
NOT FAIL WOMEN AND YOUTH IN MYANMAR**

KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA (17 OCTOBER 2025) - The Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) on 16 October 2025 co-hosted a crucial forum titled “Strengthening Regional Accountability: ASEAN’s Failure on Women, Youth, Peace and Security in Myanmar” at the IDEAS Kuala Lumpur Hotel. Jointly organised with Progressive Voice and the Alternative ASEAN Network on Burma (ALTSEAN-Burma), the forum served as an important platform to address the escalating human rights and humanitarian crisis in Myanmar, and to underscore the urgent need for stronger regional accountability mechanisms.

SUHAKAM stands in firm solidarity with the people of Myanmar, particularly women and youth who continue to face compounded risks and systematic violence since the illegal attempted coup in 2021. The forum amplified the voices of human rights defenders who shared first-hand testimonies of the dire situation on the ground, including the widespread use of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) and other grave human rights violations.

SUHAKAM Chairman, YBhg. Dato’ Seri Mohd Hishamudin Yunus, officiated the forum and drew attention to the severe scale of the humanitarian and human rights catastrophe in Myanmar. Current data indicates that the crisis has displaced more than 3.5 million people internally and resulted in over 6,000 civilian deaths since 2021. The discussions underscored the urgent need to end decades-long impunity for atrocities committed by the military, which disproportionately target women, girls, and youth from ethnic and religious minorities through systematic violence, including CRSV.

The forum also featured a panel on Women and Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) and youth representatives who shared their lived experiences of the ongoing crisis and critically assessed the implementation of the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on Women, Peace and Security (RPA WPS). The discussions further drew attention to CEDAW and Beijing+30 obligations on gender-based violence, which all neighbouring countries in ASEAN are a party to. Despite the framework’s pledge to uphold the core pillars of protection, participation, prevention, and relief and recovery, the situation in Myanmar starkly reveals ASEAN’s failure to deliver on these commitments.

SUHAKAM expressed deep concern over ASEAN’s continued inaction and silence regarding the specific needs and voices of Myanmar’s women, girls, and youth. Their exclusion from consultations and decision-making processes further entrenches marginalisation and undermines the practical relevance of the RPA WPS in addressing one of the region’s most urgent gender and human rights crises. The women of Myanmar — who have been at the forefront of the people’s revolution and resistance — must have their leadership and experiences recognised and centred in all peace and security efforts, in line with UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325).

Following the testimonies and panel discussions, SUHAKAM expressed its support for the delegation’s call for stronger Malaysian support to Myanmar’s women and youth, particularly in their humanitarian missions and steadfast efforts to end military tyranny, impunity, and gender-based violence.

SUHAKAM urges the Malaysian Government, Parliamentarians, diplomatic missions, media, and all stakeholders to take concrete action, including:

- i. Utilising all diplomatic channels to press ASEAN and Malaysia, as the Chair of ASEAN for 2025, to immediately prioritise the restoration of peace and stability in Myanmar and to ensure unhindered humanitarian access to affected communities before any election takes place;
- ii. Advocating for the inclusion of Myanmar women and youth voices in all regional and international mechanisms addressing the Myanmar crisis; and
- iii. Strengthening efforts to advance justice and accountability for atrocity crimes committed by the Myanmar military, including CRSV.



MEDIA STATEMENT HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION OF MALAYSIA (SUHAKAM)

SUHAKAM reaffirms its commitment to leveraging its platform as a National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) to advocate for human rights, justice, and accountability for the people of Myanmar at both regional and international levels.

SUHAKAM also calls for stronger regional accountability and courageous leadership within ASEAN to act now. ASEAN must not fail the ASEAN community, especially the women and youth of Myanmar.

-END-

Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)
Date: 17 October 2025