



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

**EDITOR, NEWS DESK**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**SUHAKAM EXPRESSES CONCERN, REAFFIRMS RIGHTS TO PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY  
AND EXPRESSION**

**KUALA LUMPUR (11 FEBRUARY 2026)** - The Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) expresses its concern over the recent arrest of 20 individuals in connection with police action relating to the planned rally organised by Gerakan Anti Rumah Anutan Haram (GARAH) on 7 February 2026.

SUHAKAM reiterates that the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly are fundamental liberties guaranteed under the Federal Constitution and recognised under international human rights law. At the same time, these rights are not absolute and must be exercised responsibly, with due regard to the inherent dignity, equality and rights of all persons. They must not be misused to promote hatred, racism, discrimination or hostility against any group.

Peaceful assembly remains a legitimate democratic space to raise concerns and advocate for change when conducted in a manner consistent with human rights principles, including non-discrimination, equality before the law and respect for diversity. In this regard, international standards, including the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) and Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), protect the right to manifest religion, including the establishment and protection of places of worship, and require States to prevent both direct and indirect discrimination, including where attacks on religious identity disproportionately affect ethnic or minority groups. While freedom of speech is generally protected, advocacy that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility, or violence is prohibited under international law, specifically Article 19(3) and Article 20(2) of the ICCPR.

In this context, SUHAKAM emphasises that allegations involving hate speech, racist conduct or incitement to discrimination should be addressed firmly and in accordance with the law, guided by due process and applicable human rights standards. Constitutional freedoms cannot be invoked to justify conduct that undermines the rights, safety and dignity of others.

At the same time, SUHAKAM notes that the Peaceful Assembly Act (PAA) 2012 places responsibilities on the authorities, including the police, to manage assemblies in a lawful, proportionate and facilitative manner. Any enforcement action taken should be grounded in clear legal authority, respect due process, and be appropriate to the circumstances.

SUHAKAM is closely monitoring developments surrounding this incident, including the legal basis and circumstances of enforcement actions taken, to ensure that all responses — by both organisers and authorities — remain consistent with constitutional guarantees, the rule of law, the PAA 2012, and Malaysia's international human rights obligations.

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**Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)  
11 February 2026**