



MEDIA STATEMENT HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION OF MALAYSIA (SUHAKAM)

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SUHAKAM CALLS FOR A ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY TO SAFEGUARD INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY AND PUBLIC TRUST

KUALA LUMPUR (16 FEBRUARY 2026) - The Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) expresses its concern over recent developments regarding the establishment of a special committee to investigate allegations involving the Chief Commissioner of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), following reports published by Bloomberg on 12 February 2026.

SUHAKAM does not take a position on the substance of the allegations. Nevertheless, we emphasise that corruption, as well as any perception that it is not addressed with seriousness and accountability carries profound negative human rights consequences. It undermines equality before the law, weakens access to justice, diverts public resources away from essential services, and disproportionately affects vulnerable and marginalised communities. The integrity, independence and credibility of anti-corruption institutions are therefore indispensable to the protection and realisation of human rights.

It cannot be denied that corruption is rampant in this country and is cancerous. Disgracefully, even high level ex-political leaders have been hauled to Court, convicted and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. The sad truth is that – and this is of great concern to SUHAKAM, a body entrusted to promote and defend human rights - the higher the level of corruption that prevails in our society, the more it undermines the human rights of the citizens. In the battle against corruption, it is imperative that those entrusted to combat this evil practice must not only be beyond any suspicion of wrongdoing but must be perceived to be whiter than white.

Whilst the establishment of a special investigation committee (or task force) is acknowledged, concerns arise where such a body lacks clear statutory authority and necessary investigative powers. An inquiry that does not have the power to compel the attendance of witnesses, require the production of documents, or otherwise secure relevant evidence risks being viewed as limited in scope and effectiveness. In matters of significant public interest, these limitations may erode public confidence in both the investigative process and its outcome.

In light of this, SUHAKAM calls for the establishment of a Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCI) under the Commissions of Enquiry Act 1950 (Act 119), rather than a task force without coercive powers. An RCI is vested with the authority to summon witnesses, examine them under oath, and compel the production of documents. Such powers are essential to ensure a thorough, independent and transparent examination of all relevant allegations. The scope of the inquiry must also be comprehensive. Investigations should not be confined to a narrow set of issues but should encompass all serious allegations that have entered the public domain, including those relating to alleged share ownership and reported allegations of collusion. A fragmented or selective approach risks creating perceptions of partiality and undermining the credibility of the process.

Institutional independence is equally critical. The composition of any investigative body must avoid actual or perceived conflicts of interest. Public confidence depends not only on the fairness of the process, but also on its appearance of fairness. Clear separation between investigative and prosecutorial functions, together with safeguards against undue influence, are fundamental principles of natural justice. In this respect, SUHAKAM is of the view that the proposed investigative body should not be chaired by the Attorney General. Instead, it should be led by an independent and respected retired Senior Judge, such as *Yang Amat Berbahagia Tun Tengku Maimun binti Tuan Mat*, who is widely recognised for her judicial integrity. The membership of the investigative body should also be broadened to include a respected representative from Civil Society Organisations (CSO) in order to enhance credibility, transparency and public trust in the process.



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SUHAKAM further emphasises that appropriate interim administrative measures may be necessary to safeguard the integrity and credibility of the investigation. Such measures should not be perceived to be punitive in nature but are intended to preserve public confidence and ensure that the inquiry proceeds independently and without interference, pending its conclusion. In this regard, SUHAKAM supports the call for Tan Sri Azam Baki to be placed on garden leave while the RCI carries out its investigation, as this would help prevent any real or perceived influence over the investigative process.

Transparency remains a cornerstone of democratic governance and an essential component of the rule of law. The public should be informed of the mandate, powers and progress of the inquiry, subject to legitimate confidentiality considerations. Open and accountable processes strengthen institutions and reinforce public trust.

Malaysia's commitment to combating corruption must be aligned with its human rights obligations. Where allegations involve those entrusted with enforcing anti-corruption laws, the response must be robust, independent and beyond reproach.

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Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)

16 February 2026