



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

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**SUHAKAM RAISES CONCERN OVER ARRESTS, CALLS FOR RIGHTS-BASED
APPROACH TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

KUALA LUMPUR (10 APRIL 2026) – The Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) expresses concern regarding a recent incident at a public forum in Kuala Lumpur, where three individuals were reportedly arrested and detained by the police after briefly displaying placards during a speech by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) Chief Commissioner. SUHAKAM notes that the individuals have since been released. However, despite their subsequent release, SUHAKAM remains concerned about the circumstances and justification for the initial arrests.

Given that the act in question appears to have been peaceful and within the scope of protected expression, the arrests raise important questions about how the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly are interpreted and applied in practice. In this regard, SUHAKAM reiterates its consistent position that the right to freedom of expression is a fundamental liberty guaranteed under Article 10(1)(a) of the Federal Constitution and Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). As a cornerstone of a democratic society, this right enables individuals to express views, engage in public discourse, and participate meaningfully in matters of public interest. While not absolute, any restrictions must comply with established international human rights principles, including those reflected in Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which require that limitations be lawful, necessary, and proportionate.

In this regard, SUHAKAM emphasises that the Government has an obligation not only to regulate, but also to facilitate and protect the exercise of these rights. This includes ensuring that individuals are able to express their views peacefully and without undue interference, while maintaining public order. Any enforcement measures should be undertaken in a manner that is proportionate, non-arbitrary, and consistent with the rule of law, with full adherence to due process guarantees. In this context, it is important that the application of criminal sanctions, particularly those with broad or general scope, is carefully considered to ensure that it does not result in a disproportionate impact or inadvertently discourage the legitimate exercise of freedom of expression.

SUHAKAM also notes that the issues raised in the forum relate to matters of public concern that have previously attracted public attention, including SUHAKAM's earlier call for an independent and transparent inquiry to uphold institutional integrity and public confidence. In such contexts, it is especially important that differing views can be expressed peacefully and that all parties are treated fairly and in accordance with the law.

SUHAKAM therefore calls on all relevant authorities to ensure that any enforcement measures arising from this incident are undertaken in a fair, measured, and proportionate manner, consistent with constitutional guarantees and international human rights standards. SUHAKAM remains committed to upholding both freedom of expression and public order, recognising that both are essential and mutually reinforcing pillars of a democratic society.

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**Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)
10 April 2026**