



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

**EDITOR, NEWS DESK**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**SUHAKAM CALLS FOR RESTRAINT AND REVIEW OF LAWS FOLLOWING  
ARREST OF SOCIAL MEDIA USER**

**KUALA LUMPUR (17 APRIL 2026)** - The Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) expresses grave concern over the arrest and remand of a TikTok user, reportedly in connection with a video containing remarks against the Prime Minister of Malaysia.

SUHAKAM reiterates that freedom of expression is a fundamental liberty guaranteed under Article 10 of the Federal Constitution and is essential to the functioning of a democratic society. This right includes the freedom to express dissent, criticism, and opinions on matters of public interest, including those concerning public officials and government leadership.

In this context, SUHAKAM emphasises that the arrest and custodial remand of an individual for non-violent expression was a disproportionate and unlawful measure. The use of criminal sanctions in such cases raises serious concerns regarding the shrinking of civic space and risks creating a chilling effect on the exercise of free expression in Malaysia.

SUHAKAM is particularly concerned with the continued reliance on broad and vaguely worded provisions under laws such as the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998 (Section 233) as well as the Sedition Act 1948. These laws have long been subject to criticism for their wide scope and susceptibility to inconsistent interpretation which may result in the undue restriction of legitimate expression, including criticism of public office holders.

While SUHAKAM acknowledges that freedom of expression may be subject to restrictions, international human rights standards are clear that such limitations must meet the strict tests of legality, necessity, and proportionality. In particular, restrictions must pursue a legitimate aim and must be the least intrusive means available. Arrest and detention should be measures of last resort, not default responses to speech-related offences.

SUHAKAM therefore calls on the Government and relevant enforcement authorities to:

- i. Immediately review the necessity of custodial measures in this case and similar cases involving non-violent expression;
- ii. Exercise maximum restraint in the use of criminal laws against individuals expressing opinions online;
- iii. Undertake a comprehensive review of Section 233 of the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998 and other related laws, with a view to aligning them with international human rights standards on freedom of expression;
- iv. Ensure that all enforcement actions are carried out in full compliance with due process guarantees, including transparency, accountability, and access to legal representation.

SUHAKAM further underscores that public officials must be prepared to tolerate a higher degree of scrutiny and criticism. The use of criminal law to shield public figures from criticism is inconsistent with democratic principles and undermines public confidence in governance. This incident highlights the urgent need for a rights-based recalibration of Malaysia's approach to regulating online expression, one that protects individuals from harm without suppressing legitimate dissent.

SUHAKAM remains steadfast in its commitment to safeguarding freedom of expression and calls on all stakeholders to uphold and respect this fundamental right.

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