JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT ON THE RENEWAL OF THE SUHAKAM - NHRCN MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA (23 SEPTEMBER 2026) - The Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) and the National Human Rights Commission of Nepal (NHRCN) have reinforced their bilateral relations through the renewal of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the Rights of Migrant Workers and People Residing in Both Countries for a period of three years from 2026 to 2028. The MoU was signed by SUHAKAM's Chairman, Dato' Seri Mohd Hishamudin Yunus and NHRCN's Chairperson, Honourable Top Bahadur Magar, at the SUHAKAM Headquarters in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The MoU was first signed in 2019 with the aim of fostering close cooperation, information sharing, two-way communication regarding complaints, joint monitoring, research, and other related activities to protect the rights of migrant workers and people residing in both countries. The MoU was then renewed twice, extending to 28 March 2024. Throughout the duration of the MoU, SUHAKAM engaged with the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society organisations (CSOs) working on the issues of Nepali migrant workers, and the Embassy of Nepal in Kuala Lumpur to exchange information regarding Nepali migrant workers in Malaysia. SUHAKAM also carried out its core work in investigating any human rights violation cases faced by migrant workers, including the deaths of Nepali migrant workers.

To date, there are approximately 400,000 Nepali workers in Malaysia. From 2021 until August 2026, SUHAKAM has received a total of 46 complaints involving Nepali workers. The complaints received regarding alleged human rights violations include passports withheld by employers, working twelve hours a day and 30 consecutive days without rest days, unpaid or delayed wages, excessive working hours without overtime pay, unsafe working conditions and inadequate protection.

The renewal of the MoU underscores the commitment of both SUHAKAM and NHRCN to strengthen bilateral cooperation by focusing on investigating any human rights violation cases faced by migrant workers, monitor the condition of the detention centres and infringement of human rights of migrant workers, addressing high fatality rates, conduct policy advocacy on recruitment fees and forced labour risk, conduct meetings with the Social Security Organisation of Malaysia (SOCSO / PERKESO) to enhance access to the social security schemes for Nepali migrant workers in Malaysia, conduct advocacy on gender equality for both the Commissions' joint actions, considering especially the rights of women migrant workers in precarious and informal employment, review policy from a human rights perspective to recommend to both governments to enhance better access to justice for the migrant workers of the respective countries, conduct capacity building for the Nepali migrant security sector, and other mutually agreed areas of collaboration.

Alongside the MoU Signing Ceremony, the NHRCN will conduct a working visit comprising meetings and consultations with various key stakeholders. The NHRCN met with the Embassy of Nepal in Kuala Lumpur, and the Non-Resident Nepali Association (NRNA) Malaysia to gather information on the current status and context of Nepalese workers in Malaysia. In addition, SUHAKAM has facilitated meetings with the Malaysian Prison Department and SOCSO as part of the fulfilments towards the implementation of the MoU.

Both Commissions encourage Nepali migrant workers in Malaysia who have experienced or witnessed possible human rights violations to lodge a complaint with SUHAKAM by scanning this QR code. The complaint submitted will be handled in accordance with SUHAKAM's complaint-handling and confidentiality procedures.

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Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)
National Human Rights Commission of Nepal (NHRCN)
23 September 2026