

SUHAKAM DAY 2026, 27 YEARS OF ADVANCING HUMAN RIGHTS IN MALAYSIA

KUALA LUMPUR (9 SEPTEMBER 2026) – The Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) commemorates SUHAKAM Day today, marking a historic 27 years since the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia Act 1999 [Act 597] was gazetted on 9 September 1999.

The establishment of SUHAKAM as Malaysia's National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) represented an important national commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights. Since its establishment and guided by its "Human Rights for All" slogan, SUHAKAM has served as an independent institution that advises and assists the Government in the formulation of legislation, administrative directives and procedures; recommends necessary measures; investigates complaints of human rights violations; conducts inquiries; promotes human rights education; and engages with communities and stakeholders across Malaysia.

As a result of its continued commitment and collaborative efforts with stakeholders, SUHAKAM was re-accredited with 'A' status by the Sub-Committee on Accreditation of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI-SCA) in June 2026. This re-accreditation reflects international recognition of SUHAKAM's continued compliance with the Paris Principles, which establish the standards for the independence, effectiveness, pluralism, and mandate of NHRIs. As an 'A' status NHRI, SUHAKAM is entitled to participate fully in international human rights mechanisms, including sessions of the United Nations Human Rights Council, the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and treaty body processes.

SUHAKAM's institutional mandate was further strengthened through amendments to Act 597, which came into force on 10 July 2024. Among other changes, the amendments enhanced the functions of the Commission and the Office of the Children's Commissioner; provided for the appointment of a Chief Children's Commissioner and two Children's Commissioners; strengthened SUHAKAM's investigative powers; and expanded its authority to visit places of detention, institutions and other relevant premises. The amendments also require authorities and relevant persons to inform SUHAKAM of actions taken in response to its recommendations.

The inclusion of representation of persons with disabilities and a requirement for at least 30 percent women in the composition of the Commission represent further important advancements towards ensuring that SUHAKAM reflects the diversity and lived experiences of the communities it serves. These measures reinforce the principles of participation, inclusion and equality embodied in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Throughout its 27-year journey, SUHAKAM has brought critical human rights concerns to national attention through complaints handling, research, public inquiries, monitoring, policy recommendations and sustained engagement with the Government, Parliament, civil society and affected communities. Its work has addressed a wide range of human rights issues, including deaths and conditions in custody, enforced disappearances, Indigenous Peoples' land rights, freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, discrimination, trafficking in persons, business and human rights, statelessness, and the rights of children, women, persons with disabilities, refugees, older persons and other vulnerable communities.

SUHAKAM also welcomes the progress made in the tabling and debate of its Annual Reports in Parliament. Parliamentary consideration of these reports strengthens public accountability and provides an important platform for human rights concerns and SUHAKAM's recommendations to be examined at the national level. While these developments represent meaningful progress, the

effectiveness of an NHRI must ultimately be measured not only by the reports it produces or the recommendations it makes, but by the extent to which those recommendations lead to tangible improvements in laws, policies, institutions and, most importantly, the lived realities of the people whose rights are intended to be protected.

In an era marked by geopolitical tensions, climate change, rapid technological developments and increasing socioeconomic pressures, SUHAKAM emphasises that human rights must remain at the centre of national policymaking and governance. Now more than ever, there is a need to reaffirm and strengthen human rights principles to ensure that development is inclusive, equitable and leaves no one behind. In this regard, SUHAKAM reiterates the importance of further strengthening its functional and operational independence, ensuring adequate and sustainable resources, enhancing transparency in the appointment process, facilitating effective and unannounced access to all places of deprivation of liberty, and establishing stronger mechanisms to ensure the timely implementation of its recommendations.

SUHAKAM Day symbolises SUHAKAM's continued commitment to fulfilling its mandate with independence, integrity and accountability. SUHAKAM will continue to serve as a bridge between the people and the State, amplify the voices of marginalised communities, and advocate for a human rights-based approach to governance and development. Guided by the principle of "Human Rights for All", SUHAKAM remains steadfast in its pursuit of a Malaysia where human dignity is respected, equality is upheld, justice is accessible to all, and the rights and freedoms of every person are protected and fulfilled.

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**Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)
9 September 2026**