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**CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER CALL FOR PROACTIVE, CHILD-SENSITIVE
ACTION ON ROAMING AND AGGRESSIVE DOGS**

KUALA LUMPUR (12 SEPTEMBER 2026) - The Children's Commissioners (CC), Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM), expresses grave concern over the recent attack on a two year old girl by five roaming dogs in Batu Pahat, Johor.

The child was reportedly attacked outside her grandmother's home at about 7.00 a.m. on 5 September 2026 and sustained serious injuries before being taken to district hospital and subsequently transferred to Hospital Sultanah Aminah in Johor Bahru for further treatment. The Children's Commissioners extend concern and solidarity to the child and her family, and hope for her continued recovery.

This incident must not be viewed as an isolated occurrence. Based on media reports reviewed by the CC, at least eight serious cases involving children being attacked or bitten by roaming or stray dogs have been reported since 2023, including cases resulting in death. These include attacks involving very young children in Pitas, Klang, Semporna, Langkawi, Sungai Buloh and Cheras, as well as the recent Batu Pahat incident. A separate case in Kuching in 2026 involved a 10-year-old boy who died following a dog bite and subsequent rabies infection.

At least three child fatalities can be identified from the media reports reviewed, namely in Semporna in 2024, Sungai Buloh in 2025 and Kuching in 2026. This review should not, however, be treated as comprehensive national statistics. What is particularly concerning is the vulnerability of the children involved. Some victims were as young as one or two years old. Reported incidents have occurred not only in remote locations, but in or near homes, residential areas and places associated with children's daily activities. In Klang, for example, an 11-year-old girl was reportedly attacked by two dogs while taking out rubbish and required surgery. In Cheras, a six-year-old boy was attacked while riding his bicycle near his home.

The risk is also not limited to dog bites. In Sitiawan, a child reportedly ran into a road after being chased by a dog and narrowly avoided being hit by a vehicle. In Kedah last month, a school pupil reportedly fell into a drain after being chased by a group of dogs while cycling to school. These incidents demonstrate that roaming or aggressive dogs can create wider risks of falls, road accidents and other serious injuries.

Children have the right to live, play, walk and travel to school in environments that are reasonably safe from foreseeable and preventable risks. Very young children are especially vulnerable because of their physical size, limited ability to defend themselves and limited capacity to respond appropriately when confronted by aggressive animals.

The CC therefore call for a fundamental shift from reactive response after tragedy to proactive prevention before a child is harmed. Action against dangerous or aggressive dogs should not only take place after a child has been hospitalised, seriously injured or lost their life. Where a risk is known, foreseeable and reasonably preventable, preventive action must be taken.

The CC call for all local authorities to establish child-sensitive roaming-dog hotspots, particularly around schools, TASKA and kindergartens, playgrounds, People's Housing Program (PPR) and flat housing, residential areas, school walking and cycling routes, bus stops and locations with repeated complaints involving aggressive or roaming dogs.

**MEDIA STATEMENT
THE OFFICE OF THE CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER OF THE
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION OF MALAYSIA (SUHAKAM)**

The CC further call on Ministry of Housing and Local Government (KPKT) and State Governments, in collaboration with local authorities (PBT) and the Department of Veterinary Services (DVS), to establish clearer, risk-based response standards:

- i. Map and identify hotspots, prioritising areas regularly used by children;
- ii. Prioritise complaints involving packs or aggressive dogs around homes, schools, playgrounds and other child-sensitive locations;
- iii. Establish clear SOPs and escalation procedures - from complaint and risk assessment to intervention, feedback and follow-up monitoring;
- iv. Conduct proactive and coordinated PBT-DVS operations, rather than waiting for a serious attack to occur;
- v. Strengthen national data collection on animal attacks involving children, including age, location, injury severity, rabies-related outcomes and intervention outcomes;
- vi. Implement long-term population and risk management, including responsible ownership, registration and licensing, prevention of abandonment, evidence-based sterilisation, waste and food-source management, appropriate facilities, and stronger cooperation between authorities, NGOs and communities; and
- vii. Ensure all enforcement is humane and lawful, consistent with the Animal Welfare Act 2015 and other applicable laws and procedures.

Protecting children does not mean disregarding animal welfare. Both objectives can and must be pursued together. Effective animal management should be child-safe, humane, professional and lawful - not indiscriminate or cruel.

The CC also stress that safety education for children, parents, schools and childcare providers is important, including guidance on avoiding aggressive animals and obtaining prompt medical attention following a bite. However, safety education must never transfer responsibility for managing a known public safety risk from authorities to children.

A young child should not have to avoid playing outside their home, using a playground or travelling to school because of a foreseeable risk posed by roaming dogs. When a danger to children is known and reasonably preventable, we cannot wait for another tragedy before acting. Effective management of roaming and aggressive dogs is not merely an animal-management issue; where children are exposed to foreseeable risk, it is a matter of child safety and protection.

The Children's Commissioners therefore call on the Federal Government, State Governments and all local authorities to act now - not after the next child is seriously harmed. Children's safety must be built through prevention, preparedness and timely intervention, not only through action after tragedy has occurred.

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**Children's Commissioners (CC)
Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)
12 September 2026**