



Appointment of SUHAKAM Commissioners and the Way Forward

(Bangkok, 24 June 2016) - The Asian NGO Network on National Human Rights Institutions (ANNI) together with its member, Suara Rakyat Malaysia (SUARAM), welcomes the appointment of the new Commissioners of the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM). We congratulate all the Commissioners on their appointment and look forward to the positive development they will bring to the human rights discourse in Malaysia.

ANNI is hopeful for the changes that SUHAKAM may spearhead with the appointment of Tan Sri Razali Ismail as the Chairperson of SUHAKAM. His wealth of experience in addressing environment and development issues at the United Nations should bring about substantive changes to the status quo related to human rights and development in Malaysia. The Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA), as the Secretariat of ANNI, also welcomes the appointment of Jerald Joseph, Director of Pusat KOMAS, a member of FORUM-ASIA from Malaysia.

ANNI eagerly awaits the unique contributions that the new Commissioners will bring to the table, and welcomes the re-appointed Commissioners who have shown their mettle in addressing human rights issues. We hope both the incumbent and new Commissioners will not shy away from the challenges of championing human rights and will take proactive measures to tackle critical human rights violations.

The appointment of SUHAKAM Commissioners came after seats were left vacant on 25 April 2016. The new Commission must be able to address the tremendous human rights violations in Malaysia today. From the use of chain remand recently demonstrated by the Royal Malaysian Police in Johor and other places; violations of the right to freedom of movement against democracy activists; as well as judicial harassment under the Sedition or Peaceful Assembly Act, the new Commission is tasked to address these issues and all human rights violations in its quest for the promotion and protection of human rights in Malaysia.

While SUHAKAM was re-accredited with 'A' Status by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) Sub-Committee on Accreditation and recognising SUHAKAM's full compliance with the Paris Principles, ANNI urges the new Commission to ensure greater commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights. We also call on the Government of Malaysia to genuinely ensure effective functioning of the new Commission, including by protecting SUHAKAM's independence and guaranteeing adequate funding.

In these dark times for human rights, ANNI hopes that the new Commission will do better than their predecessors and continue to protect and promote human rights with tenacity. SUHAKAM's endeavours to engage and collaborate with civil society in their struggle for human rights in Malaysia should be continued.