

COALITION OF MALAYSIAN NGOS IN THE UPR PROCESS (COMANGO)
Media Statement, 19 February 2014

Stop inciting violence against human rights defenders

The Coalition of Malaysian NGOs in the UPR Process (COMANGO) is shocked and deeply concerned by Ikatan Muslimin Malaysia's (ISMA) latest incitement to violence against human rights defenders who are working on human rights concerns in Malaysia.

Recent events point to a dark development in Malaysia. The public is now encouraged to commit acts of violence when certain parties do not agree with something that is being said. This happened also in the recent case involving the Member of Parliament for Seputeh, Ms Teresa Kok. In her case, there was even a reward of RM1200 to be given to the first person to slap her.

In their video which can be see here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hS6rcxXAivs&list=TL3mUavbBCi_4lz5b9nU_SQdfGQ3d8zFQXP ISMA called for aggressive action to be taken against COMANGO.

COMANGO is also shocked that on 14 February 2014, the National Fatwa Council asked for stern action to be taken against us.

COMANGO deplores all forms of intimidation and exhortations to violence. Instead, COMANGO encourages dialogue, and would welcome genuine engagements with ISMA and other parties to clarify their concerns regarding the matters raised in the COMANGO report submitted to the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in March 2013.

The climate of intimidation and instigation that these parties are attempting to create stifles open discourse on human rights concerns, and discourages critical thinking. This will lead to fewer persons and organisations being brave enough to hold elected leaders accountable to the people, to question government policies which are unjust, as well as expose decisions and actions that do not promote, protect and fulfill the human rights of all peoples in Malaysia. The stage is now set for a more authoritarian state.

COMANGO treats all actions against us human rights defenders, whether by private actors or the government, as further acts of reprisals. Their actions have forced us to send further communications to the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) and the United Nations Special Rapporteurs on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association, on Freedom of Religion or Belief, on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, and on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders. We will also communicate with the Civil Society Section of the OHCHR that focuses on acts of reprisals against NGOs that engage in United Nations processes as sanctioned in the various UN Human Rights Council resolutions. These communications will not bode well for Malaysia when its universal periodic review (UPR) report is tabled for adoption by the UN Human Rights Council on 20 March 2014.

Finally, we are deeply disappointed that the Ministry of Home Affairs has offered no explanation on the disappearance of the last sentence in their press statement dated 8 January 2014 declaring COMANGO as “illegal”. The government should set a higher standard of accountable and responsible behaviour. They should be honest and open when they have made a mistake. They should not hope that they can surreptitiously correct an error, and hope that no one will notice.

Honey Tan Lay Ean
Persatuan Kesedaran Komuniti Selangor
(EMPOWER)

Yap Swee Seng
Suara Rakyat Malaysia
(SUARAM)

for and on behalf of the Coalition of Malaysian NGOs in the UPR Process
(COMANGO)

Email: empower05@gmail.com, detention@suaram.net

Tel: [03-7784 4977](tel:03-77844977) (EMPOWER) and [03-7784 3525](tel:03-77843525)