

10 December 2020

GBM 2020 International Human Rights Day Message

10th of December of each year is celebrated as the International Human Rights Day. The theme of the 2020 celebration is “Recover Better - Stand Up For Human Rights”.

2020 has proven to be a challenging year for Malaysia. Gabungan Bertindak Malaysa (GBM) believes that it is important for Malaysia to be a nation that upholds the human rights of all people based on the dignity of universal humanity. Such an approach to human rights will demonstrate the following characteristics:

1. Fundamental liberties such as freedoms of thought, conscience, religion, speech, assembly and association must be guaranteed and protected by the state and prevented from any forms of encroachment.

As in previous years, Malaysia still has lot to improve with regards to the upholding of these freedoms. A lawyer, Fadiyah Nadwa Fikri was called up for investigation in March under the

Peaceful Assembly Act for organising the protest against the change of government. A politician, Ronnie Liu was detained by the police under Sedition Act for voicing support for Thai protesters who called for the reform of the monarchy institution in their country. University of Malaya Association of New Youth (UMANY), a student organisation which is also a member organisation of GBM, was probed by the university administration and the police, as well as threatened with violence by online thugs, for espousing the principle of constitutional monarchy when addressing the question of the King's role in national affairs. All these examples illustrate the gargantuan challenges ahead for Malaysians in preserving the fundamental liberties as provided in our constitution.

2. Governments chosen through free and fair elections must have the necessary and effective mechanisms to curb distortion of electoral mandate and under-representation of women and minorities

The political drama throughout 2020 has proven that Malaysia is in desperate need to establish mechanism against the distortion of people's mandate. Whether it is anti-hopping law, recall election or any other mechanism, it is imperative for the people to keep their confidence in the electoral process and to feel that their votes matter. This is also important to curb the political instability caused by the never-ending defections and enticement of elected representatives.

3. Impartiality and integrity of Judiciary, Attorney General's Chambers, Bureaucracy, Police, Military and all other unelected public institutions

It is important that all these public institutions keep their integrity and remain impartial. The double standard perceived by the treatment of VIPs and common people who were caught floating rules of Covid-19 prevention and the dropping of charges against politicians of the ruling governments by Attorney General's Chambers have undermined people's confidence in these institutions and efforts must be made to restore people's trust in them.

4. Socio-economic inclusion and sustainable development to ensure no one is left behind with basic needs fulfilled, equal opportunity for all to pursue life goals and a good life

The effects of economic and social disruption of Covid-19 are felt by all people living in Malaysia. However, the vulnerable portions of the society are those who are disproportionately affected, such as people in low-income groups who lost their job, students from impoverished family who are unable to afford necessary equipment for online learning, students from rural area with poor Internet connection which adversely affected their progress in online learning, migrant workers living in deplorable condition susceptible to communicable diseases including Covid-19 and many more. It is our hope that the people in power and those who aspire to be in power do not view these predicaments as temporary ailments that will go away once the threat of Covid-19 has abated but instead take a deep look into the vulnerability exposed by the crisis and take the necessary measures to develop a new socio-economic and development agenda that are inclusive and sustainable. This new agenda must also include the indispensable component of spirituality and moral formation as a holistic approach to development that seeks the material as well as the spiritual wellbeing of a person, his family and communal life and place in society and the nation.

The future of the country lies with each and every action that we take to ensure that everyone's right as human being and as part of common humanity is upheld and guaranteed.

Badlishah Sham Baharin

Chair, Gabungan Bertindak Malaysia (GBM)

For an on behalf of the Executive Council, GBM.

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Gabungan Bertindak Malaysia(GBM)

Plan of Action for Malaysia (PoAM)

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Together We Build A Better Malaysia!