

For Immediate Release

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Suara Rakyat Malaysia (SUARAM) is appalled by the 'new' Independent Police Conduct Commission (IPCC) introduced by the Perikatan Nasional (PN) government at Parliament today.

After the initial claims that the government will be tabling a new bill in lieu of the Independent Police Complaints and Misconduct Commission (IPCMC) bill proposed by Pakatan Harapan, the bill tabled in Parliament shows that PN merely took an earlier form of IPCMC bill introduced in October 2019 and further weakened it before re-tabling it as though it is a new bill. The whole machination is a waste of public resources and an attempt to subvert and bypass the consultation and recommendations by the Parliament Select Committee for Consideration of Bills.

The 'new' bill introduced by PN reintroduced fatal flaws that would undermine the functions of IPCMC/IPCC and render it completely irrelevant and a waste of public funds. Key areas of concerns include:

- Requirements for early notice for Commission to visit detention centres
- Removal of disciplinary power or power to compel actions based on recommendations made
- 'exemption' of acts provided for in the Inspector-General Standing Orders (IGSO) (Section 96 & 97 of the Police Act 1967)
- Power for police officers to refuse answer to the Commission if it may expose other police officers to criminal charges or penalty
- Power to refuse the disclosure of sensitive documents or information on the grounds of national security or national interest
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With the inclusion of this sections in the IPCC Bill, the Commission will be worse than the existing mechanisms under the Enforcement Agency Integrity Commission (EAIC) as investigation for key misconducts does not include acts covered by IGSO, police officers can refuse to answer based on a subjective and arbitrary excuse, and no power for the Commission to ensure its recommendations are implemented.

SUARAM calls on the PN to review the recommendations put forth by the Parliament Select Committee for Consideration of Bills and include that in the proposed IPCC. Introducing a Commission that is doomed to failure at a time when the Royal Malaysian Police is struggling with allegations of serious misconduct that includes police brutality, custodial death and enforced disappearance will only further tarnish the reputation of the police force and affirm public mistrust of the police force.

An accountable and professional police force would not fear any scrutiny by an independent commission as public scrutiny provides the police force with an opportunity to address public concerns and prove that the police force is not involved in any misconduct and are held accountable for any misconduct committed.

In Solidarity

Executive Director
SUARAM

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