

**Suaram condemns LGBT bashing by Najib and Anwar**  
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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak and Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim came under fire from human rights NGO Suaram today for their direct attacks against lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transsexuals, which it said will promote discrimination against the LGBT community.

"The statements have certainly sent out a clear message that approves and justifies homophobic and transphobic violence, abuse and harassment against LGBTs by society," the group said in a statement.

"It must be made clear that LGBTs are not asking for any new or special rights. They are simply asking the government to live up to its promises and obligations on recognising equality and non-discrimination for all human beings."

Suaram was referring to Anwar's July 18 testimony in court in his suit against Malay daily Utusan Malaysia.

Anwar said laws that discriminated homosexuals were needed in order to protect the sanctity of heterosexual marriages, but argued that such archaic laws must be reviewed to prevent the innocent from being penalised.

'The enemies of Islam'

The next day Najib said in a speech that the "LGBT community, along with liberalism and pluralism, are the enemies of Islam".

Such "absolutely distasteful" remarks, Suaram believes, fly in the face of past promises by both leaders to uphold human rights such as the freedoms of expression, assembly and association in line with international standards.

"Politicians should stop playing to the gallery but get down to the serious business of reform, which starts at the door of human rights."

The NGO accused both Pakatan Rakyat and the ruling BN government of perpetuating homophobia via such remarks that smacked of fear and a culture of homophobic intolerance.

"We should not allow fear to manifest itself into discrimination or in the dehumanisation of any human being."

Suaram expressed deep concern that religious and political leaders, as well as the media, consistently demonise LGBTs, who became frequent targets of hate speech, attacks and harassment.

Citing the UN Human Rights Council's pronouncement that homosexuality is protected by Article 2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Suaram

stressed that all people deserve humanity, dignity and rights, regardless of their sexual orientation.

It called on the Malaysian government, members of the opposition and civil society to take concrete steps to recognise the civil status of the LGBT community and to stop all intolerance, discrimination and violence against them.

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