

Suhakam slams Najib's 'narrow human rights'

MalaysiaKini.com

Aug 20, 2015

The Human Rights Commission (Suhakam) has rubbished assertions by the country's leadership that human rights in Malaysia are different from the universal version.

While not mentioning names, it is clear Suhakam was reacting to Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's remarks on Tuesday that universal human rights are not for Malaysia.

Suhakam chairperson Hasmy Agam said Malaysia had a duty to uphold human rights in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the Organisation of Islamic Countries' Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam (CDHRI).

"Suhakam is dismayed by the narrow approach taken by the country's leadership to interpret and understand the long established universal human rights principles.

"For purposes of clarity, the commission emphasises that the CDHRI guarantees many of the same rights as the UDHR, while at the same time affirming the syariah as its source.

At an international wassatiyah seminar on Tuesday, Najib declared that Malaysia had a different definition of human rights based on Islam and that must be defended even though it doesn't match the international version.

Hasmy cited Article 1 of the CDHRI, which states: "All men (humankind) are equal in terms of basic human dignity and basic obligations and responsibilities, without any discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, language, sex, religious belief, political affiliation, social status or other considerations."

He also pointed out that Malaysia is a signatory of many other human rights conventions and declarations that affirm the country's commitment to human rights.

The "statements by the leadership", Hasmy said, also ignored Section 4(4) of the Suhakam Act, which he said legitimises the UDHR under Malaysian laws.

Suhakam regrets myths

"The commission therefore regrets the many myths and misunderstandings that have sprung up on the concept of human rights, and in particular, the construal and superficial understanding of human rights in Malaysia.

"The commission calls on the government to emulate the best practices of other Muslim countries with regard to the advancement of human rights.

"The challenges of promoting and protecting human rights in Malaysia does not end with the adoption of a declaration or the establishment of a human rights commission," Hasmy

said.

He added Suhakam would do its best to raise public awareness about human rights.

Malaysia's human rights record has often been criticised.

The US State Department's Human Rights Report on Malaysia 2014 highlighted a laundry list of abuses, including alleged sedition-based investigations, the prosecution of former opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim, restrictions on religious freedom, deaths in custody and detentions without trial.

Other areas of concern listed in the report are proselytising and prohibitions on the freedom to change one's religion, discrimination against the LGBT community and labour problems including the plights of migrant workers.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd

Source: <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/309223>