

Suaram blasts Najib, Anwar over anti-LGBT statements
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By Hafidz Baharom

KUALA LUMPUR, July 25 — Human rights organisation Suara Rakyat Malaysia (Suaram) today condemned remarks prejudicial towards non-heterosexual orientations from both Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak and Opposition Leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

In a statement on their website, Suaram executive director Nalini Elumalai expressed regret over the two leaders' decision to single out the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community for contempt and discrimination.

"We recall the promises and commitments made by both leaders to uphold human rights, that is freedoms of expression, assembly and association in line with international standards," she said.

She added the statements only served to encourage 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 by the society," she added.

"[The LGBT community] are simply asking the government to live up to their promises and obligations in recognising equality and non-discrimination for all human beings," Nalini added

She also said that Suaram was deeply concerned with the situation where religious and political leaders, as well as the media's consistent "demonization" of LGBT communities in Malaysia.

"LGBT people are frequently targeted and exposed to hate speech, attacks and harassment. We believe that everyone in Malaysia deserves to be free from discrimination, harassment and violence regardless of their sexual orientations and their gender identities," she said.

Nalini also said that the UN Human Rights Council has expressly stated that homosexuality is protected by Article 2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) as a special status of non-discrimination and urged states to pass anti-discrimination legislation that expressly includes sexual orientation as a protected ground.

Last week, Najib said the LGBT community, pluralism and liberalism were enemies of Islam and it was compulsory for Muslims to be against these.

Separately, Anwar had said while in court that he supports discrimination against LGBTs in order to ensure the sanctity of marriage between a man and a woman.

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