



MEDIA RELEASE
For Immediate Release

HIV workplace discrimination at large

The Malaysian AIDS Council HIV and Human Rights Mitigation Report 2015 calls for a strengthened rights-based AIDS response and increased protection of rights for employees living with HIV.

KUALA LUMPUR, 13 December 2016 – Discrimination at the workplace made up one third of the total 15 complaints documented in the HIV and Human Rights Mitigation Report 2015, the Malaysian AIDS Council (MAC) has revealed.



Bakhtiar Talhah, Malaysian AIDS Council (MAC) President (right) with Fifa Rahman, Hepatitis C Access and Affordability Project Manager, MAC and author of the HIV and Human Rights Mitigation Report 2015.

Launched in conjunction with [Human Rights Day](#) (observed on 10 December), the report further highlights cases of discrimination against people living with HIV and key affected populations in various other sectors including healthcare, law enforcement and education.

“The vast majority of these cases stemmed from the perpetrators’ own lack of HIV knowledge and stigmatising personal beliefs and attitudes towards HIV,” said Bakhtiar Talhah, President of the MAC.

“The urgent need to address this knowledge gap, particularly in the workplace and business settings, cannot be overstated.



“In addition, employers need to recognise the negative impact of discrimination resulting from this gap in HIV knowledge on their business. Not only does HIV based workplace discrimination cost businesses productivity and profitability due to loss of talent, but also calls into question the employer’s ability and commitment to protecting the rights of their employees,” he added.

Complaints of employment discrimination – which in the past year overwhelmingly occurred in the tourism, hospitality, and entertainment industries – involved termination, forced resignation, demotion and nonconsensual disclosure of HIV status by panel doctor. The latter contradicts the rights and responsibilities of doctors as prescribed by the [Malaysian Medical Association HIV/AIDS Charter for Doctors](#).

In mitigating the impact of these discriminatory practices, MAC worked in partnership with the Department of Occupational Health and Safety (DOSH), Ministry of Human Resources. In most cases, the interventions were successful, with the complainants being retained in employment and the companies in question being sensitised to workplace management of HIV and AIDS.

Bakhtiar commented, “We urge businesses and corporations to take the appropriate measures to ensure that the rights of all their employees are protected, one of which is to adopt the [Code of Practice on Prevention and Management of HIV/AIDS at the Workplace](#) provided by the DOSH.”

“Every single person living with HIV is entitled to their rights to health and to be free from discrimination or any forms of inhumane and degrading treatment. The protection of these basic human rights is the cornerstone of an effective AIDS response and a pre-requisite for ending AIDS.”

“In the meantime, we continue to encourage individuals who have faced discrimination on the basis of their HIV status to step forward and report those incidents to us,” he concluded.

This is the third publication in the HIV and Human Rights Mitigation Report series, available for download [here](#).

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Malaysian AIDS Council

The Malaysian AIDS Council (MAC) was established in 1992 to serve as an umbrella organisation to support and coordinate the efforts of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working on HIV & AIDS issues in Malaysia. MAC works in close partnership with government agencies, the private sector and international organisations, to ensure a committed and effective NGO-led response to the HIV epidemic. In addition to providing nationwide coverage of HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services, MAC and its Partner Organisations serve as the common voice for communities most affected by HIV & AIDS in the country. Learn more at www.mac.org.my

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