

PRESS STATEMENT



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Act Against Hate Crime Towards Transgender Community Urges Malaysian AIDS Council

KUALA LUMPUR, 17 January 2019 – The Malaysian AIDS Council (MAC) is deeply saddened and shocked to learn about the recent deaths of two transgender women in Klang.

While our focus is mainly on HIV/AIDS issues in Malaysia, we cannot ignore actions that infringe the human rights of any individual or community.

While the tragedy in Klang could have been an unfortunate incident, it should not be treated as an isolated case. It may well signal a rise in hate crime against the transgender community and it is time that we make a stand on the issue. It is not about the need for better enforcement or stronger sentencing but about sending the right message to everyone involved.

Since 2007, reported cases of fatal deaths involving transgender women in Malaysia have been on the rise. The number of those who experienced a hate crime or incident has also increased over the last five years. The transgender community often becomes frequent target of discriminatory acts and threats. They are shunned by society and unable to voice their sufferings or find support for their well-being.

We need to provide a safe environment for the transgender people and educate the public that they have the same right as everyone else in our Malaysian society.

Without safe access to public spaces — be it hospitals, shelters or the workplace — they run the risk of facing unwarranted violence. The transgender people should have the assurance that if their lives are under threat, they can seek refuge without fear of rejection, humiliation as well as discrimination, and they should not be subjected to escalated violence.

If we want to stop the rise in violence against transgender people across the nation, we must take strong measures to recognise their basic human rights. It is also about changing the heart and mind set to make the LGBT issue as something that matters to everyone.

As an umbrella organisation, MAC is open to work with related stakeholders such as The Royal Malaysia Police and other enforcement agencies as well as the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) and other organisations or individuals who are bold enough to step forward to lend a helping hand.

MAC also urges the transgender community not to fear getting access to treatment as everyone has the right to educate and empower themselves.

To get in touch with the Transgender Working Group you may contact:

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About Malaysian AIDS Council

Malaysian AIDS Council (Malay: Majlis AIDS Malaysia, abbrev: MAC) was established in 1992 under the Ministry of Health (MOH) with a mission to represent, mobilise and strengthen non-governmental organisations and communities who were working with HIV/AIDS issues. MAC works with its partner organisations in a diverse range of activities from advocating and policy reforms; developing awareness and communication materials; creating public awareness campaigns; conducting and organising workshops and seminars; rolling out prevention and education programmes; providing care and support services and psychological counselling.