EDITOR, NEWS DESK **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

PRESS STATEMENT

"The Human Rights Commission of Malaysia asserts that Parliamentary Immunity is a Democratic Right"

Kuala Lumpur (19 March 2015) – The Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) regrets the decision of the Royal Malaysian Police (PDRM) to detract from the principle of Parliamentary privilege by invoking the Sedition Act 1948 against Members of Parliament in the course of Parliamentary debates.

The Commission has repeatedly expressed its concern over the invocation of the Sedition Act by PDRM, including recently in 2014 on a state assemblyperson for words spoken in the State Assembly. The Commission registers its serious concern at the latest arrest of a Member of Parliament under the Sedition Act and calls on the authorities to respect and uphold the principle of Parliamentary and State Assembly privilege accorded to our elected representatives.

Crucial to parliamentary democracy is the assurance that Members of Parliament are privileged with the authority to express their views and opinions in Parliament without fear or favour as representatives of the people.

The Commission emphasises that the freedom of speech and expression in Parliament shall not be impeached or become the basis of criminal proceedings. It is therefore essential that Members of Parliament are guaranteed freedom from criminal prosecution, civil suits or superfluous disciplinary action.

While the Commission recognises that there are exceptions to the privileges and immunities enjoyed by Parliamentarians as contained in Articles 63(4) and 72(4) of the Federal Constitution, the Commission reiterates its position that the authorities must ensure proportionality of punishment against Parliamentarians, with due regard to existing measures as provided for under the Standing Orders of Parliament and Assembly. Nonetheless the fundamental right of freedom of speech shall be upheld in Parliament at all times.

For further press information contact the Commission's Media Relations Division on:
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The Commission also wishes to advise the authorities that Parliamentary immunity is not an individual privilege granted to Members of Parliament for their personal advantage, but is instead a privilege for the benefit and interests of all citizens, as Parliament has a central role to play in the protection of the basic rights of all Malaysians.

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TAN SRI HASMY AGAM
Chairman
The Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)
19 March 2015