



**MEDIA STATEMENT  
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION OF MALAYSIA (SUHAKAM)**

**EDITOR, NEWS DESK**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**PRESS STATEMENT**

**KUALA LUMPUR (6 JULY 2018)** - The Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) will not support the government's proposal as reported by the media, to develop a standard operating procedure (SOP) to impose stricter guidelines to standardise screening processes for marriages involving minors because the SOP will not be in the best interest of the child; but will instead perpetuate and preserve child marriage in the country.

SUHAKAM emphasises that child marriage is a complete violation of a child's human rights. SUHAKAM maintains that child marriage must be made a crime as child marriage can be used to justify sex with a child. SUHAKAM would like to highlight that child brides, incapable of consenting to sex can also be raped in the act of consummation of the marriage.

SUHAKAM is disappointed that the Ministry of Women, Children and Community Development has failed to recognise these serious consequences and has continued to be ineffective in enforcing a minimum age for marriage at 18 despite the shocking numbers of child marriages in Malaysia.

On the right to freedom of religion, SUHAKAM would like to point out that religious practices are subject to Article 11(5) of the Federal Constitution whereby any act contrary to any general law relating to public order, public health or morality shall not be authorized. This means that with the political will, it is possible for child marriages to be criminalised at all levels in the country.

SUHAKAM calls on the Ministry to be steadfast in the protection of children's rights, and to be consistent in the government's position in its manifesto to introduce a law that sets 18 as the minimum age of marriage (commitment 4 "Special Commitments for Women" page 140).

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**Tan Sri Razali Ismail  
Chairman  
Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)  
6 July 2018**

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**"Human Rights For All"**

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