

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

12 December 2007
Global Knowledge 3 Forum
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Open letter to the Prime Minister of Malaysia

Malaysia as host to the Global Knowledge 3 Forum has pledged its commitment to knowledge sharing, to an open exchange of information and to building a just and fair society.

These goals can, however, only be achieved in a society that respects fundamental rights. Since the beginning of November, however, the freedoms of assembly and expression have come under attack in Malaysia. These universal human rights are guaranteed under Article 10 of Malaysia's Federal Constitution and are enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to which Malaysia is a signatory.

Further, these rights have been upheld by the Malaysian Human Rights Commission, Suhakam. The Commission has given guidelines and suggestions following two separate rallies where there were allegations of police violence. In both of these cases, the Commission found that while there were incidences of violence by protesters, these could have been contained if the police had played a constructive and professional role, rather than engaging in excessive force themselves.

In line with these recommendations, and the fundamental principles behind them, it is with concern that we, the undersigned note:

- a. That on 10 November, 2007 police fired tear gas and sprayed chemical-laced water cannons on 40,000 people demonstrating in support of a call for four electoral reforms, including: the use of indelible ink, clean-up of the electoral roll, abolition of domestic postal voting, and fair access to the media. Police claimed to have arrested 245 people. On 8 September, the organisers, the Coalition for Clean and Fair Elections (Bersih) had had an earlier information rally on the East Coast state of Terengganu, where police had fired tear gas, water cannons and live bullets at the crowd, with two people suffering gunshot wounds.
- b. That on 25 November, police fired tear gas and used water cannons to break up a demonstration by ethnic Indians who were attempting to deliver a petition to the British High Commissioner in Kuala Lumpur. The petition included complaints of enduring racial discrimination in Malaysia as a result of former colonial rule. Estimates put the number arrested at around 400, with 31 denied bail and facing various charges including attempted murder.
- c. That on 9 December, eight people were detained for participating in a march for International Human Rights Day. About 100 people took part in the march and some of

those arrested were detained after complying with police demands to request that the demonstrators disperse. One lawyer was further detained after the march, after requesting that police refrain from removing banners hung at the Bar Council, as part of the celebrations for International Human Rights Day. The Attorney-General himself presented arguments why the latter should be denied bail, which was granted the following morning.

d. That on 9 December, a further 14 people were arrested for their involvement in the Bersih activities of 8 September and 10 November, including one of those who had been shot.

e. That on 10 December, International Human Rights Day, blogger Jeff Ooi was called in for questioning by the police regarding an interview he had given Al-Jazeera, concerning the 10 November rally.

f. That on 11 December, one of the organisers of the 25 November demonstration was arrested, released and then re-arrested, although the charges behind the arrest are uncertain.

g. That on 11 December, police arrested 23 people from Bersih, at the Malaysian parliament. They were delivering a memorandum to protest a proposed Constitutional amendment to extend the tenure of the Chairman of the Election Commission. Among those arrested was the Executive Director of the Centre for Independent Journalism, Gayathry Venkiteswaran.

We, participants of the Global Knowledge 3 (GK3) Forum, urge that:

1. The Malaysian government uphold its responsibility to its constitution and grant the right to freedom of assembly and expression to all;
2. That the government implement the suggestions made by the Malaysian Human Rights Commission Suhakam, particularly those made in relation to the Jalan Kebun and 'Bloody Sunday' inquiries;
3. That the police and the government of Malaysia allow freedom of assembly without favour, to all;
4. That an independent commission be established to investigate allegations of police brutality during the incidents described above; and
5. That the police drop charges against those expressing their constitutional rights of freedom of assembly and expression.

Signed by (individuals and organisations):

1. AMARC Asia-Pacific
2. AMARC Radio Lima, CEMARA INA
3. AMARC, Senegal, Awa ATEDHIOU
4. Andrew Bartlett, Helvetas
5. Anglea Kuga Thas, Knowledge and Rights for Young People through Safer Spaces
6. ASM Rezaur Rahman, DRIK, Bangladesh
7. Association for Progressive Communications (APC)
8. Association of Community Radio, Nepal
9. Association of Progressive Communications, Women's Networking Support Programme (APC WNSP)
10. Astute Associates (Pvt) Ltd (Pakistan)
11. BFES
12. Campaign for Popular Media Reform, Thailand
13. Centre for Independent Journalism, Malaysia
14. CEPES
15. Civil Media Development Institute, Thailand
16. CKUT 90.3fm, Montreal
17. Combine Resource Institution, Imam
18. Community Radio Support Centre, Nepal
19. Cordillera Human Rights Alliance
20. Cordillera People's Alliance, The Philippines
21. ECONews, Africa
22. Eiko Kawamura CEPEO (Peru)
23. Eva Tanner, Diplofoundation
24. Foundation for Media Alternatives
25. Freeplay Foundation (UK)
26. Hak Sokteap, Center for Social Development, Cambodia
27. ICT – Mindanao Philippines
28. iValueTree (India)
29. Jaromil, Dyne.org Foundation
30. Juca Cunha, Diversity Insitute (Brazil)
31. Karim Kasim MOSAIC (Egypt)

32. KataGender, Malaysia
33. Khairul Haqif, DRIK, Bangladesh
34. Lin McDevitt-Pugh, IIAV, Netherlands
35. Lucia Ruiz Oliveras.Area Mujer Radio Vallekas. Madrid. Espana
36. M A Haqije ANW ComputerJagat
37. Mahmud, C D Net
38. Maria Eugenia Chavez Fonseca, Salud Integral para la Mujer, SIPAM
39. Ms Asefa Momin, SEWA (India)
40. Mvan Deventer (CSIR SA)
41. Radio Laura, Switzerland
42. Radio Vallekas, Lucia Ruiz
43. Rashed
44. Riff Fullan, Helvetas
45. Rino Garzarelli, Dyne.org (Italy)
46. Ruby Anable, Ghana Community Radio Network
47. Shahzad Ahmad, Bytes for All Pakistan
48. Stephanie Hankey, Tactical Technology Collective
49. Sunil Abraham, Open Society Institute – Information Programme
50. Surga FM, East Java
51. TBLAFI
52. Tesa de Vela, Isis International – Manila
53. The International Open Source Network, IOSN
54. Theo Boudoffi, Yinternet.org (Switzerland)
55. VOICES, India
56. Young Asia Television
57. Abdul Waheed SMRO
58. Ade Tenesia
59. Adriel Wong (Malaysia)
60. Aelam Deake, Japan
61. AHM Bazlur Rahman (Bangladesh)
62. Alice Munyva, Kenya
63. Alvin Marcelo
64. Analia Lavin, APC (Uruguay)

65. Anas Tawiveva
66. Andy Tan (Malaysia)
67. Anwari (Indonesia)
68. Ashish Sen (India)
69. Aslam Rafee
70. Baumuturaki Musinguzi, Uganda
71. Ben Grubb (Australia)
72. Bibhusan Bista
73. Biq Fitri Sundari (Indonesia)
74. Bruno Q.T Bernardes (Brazil)
75. Businge Gerald (Uganda)
76. Chai Shih Wei (Malaysia)
77. Cheekay Cinco (Philippines)
78. Chevonne Goh (Malaysia)
79. Chiranneh Premchaiporn, Thailand
80. Chitra Mukherjee
81. Christine Apikul
82. D Ramakrishnan (India)
83. Daniel Chang (Malaysia)
84. Daphne Sabanes Plou, Argentina
85. Dimanche Long
86. Dina Listiorini, Indonesia
87. Edith Garcia, Nicaragua
88. Elizabeth Foo (Malaysia)
89. Fara La'Jam (Malaysia)
90. Fazil Irwan
91. Fouad Bajwa, Pakistan
92. Galriad Tan (Malaysia)
93. Geeta Malkhota
94. Geetha Bhardwey (India)
95. Gwen Longia, The Philippines
96. Harpreet Singh (Singapore)
97. Harry Deacon

98. Hilmi Ahmed (Sri Lanka)
99. Hopeton Dunn (Jamaica)
100. Hwa Yi Xing, Malaysia
101. Irfan Khan (India)
102. Ita Rosita
103. Janice Lim
104. Javier Loli
105. Jennifer Rubis (Sarawak, Malaysia)
106. Jeremy Hucerstein
107. Jiangan Li
108. Joe Sullivan (USA)
109. John Nelson (Malaysia)
110. John Tarant
111. Juan Vega, Bolivia
112. Juntrion Saham, Thailand
113. Kamrul Hannan Monju (Bangladesh)
114. Kana (South Africa)
115. Karin Negadilt, Ecuador
116. Kavinash Vikna
117. Khairil Yusof
118. Kishor Prouhan (Nepal)
119. Kyoko Ngau (Taiwan)
120. Lauren Fok, South Africa
121. Leelangi Wanasundra
122. Ludher Inderjit Singh
123. Mahadi Mohamad (Germany)
124. Manori Wysekera (Sri Lanka)
125. Marcelo Solervicens (Chile)
126. Mariani
127. Mariani (Acheh)
128. Mark Surman (Canada)
129. Mary Efosin (Cameroon)
130. Matsuura Tetsuo (Japan)

131. Maya Thapa
132. Md. Mahamudul Hasan John
133. Melinda Tiong Ting Ting (Malaysia)
134. Michael Roberts
135. Mohan Devada (Sri Lanka)
136. Mohd Azad (Malaysia)
137. Monica Kerrets
138. Murali Shanmugarelan (UK)
139. Nalaka Gunawardene (Sri Lanka)
140. Nantaporn Techprasertsakul, Thailand
141. Nasir Sobri (Penang)
142. Natowa Becky (Cameroon)
143. Neil Wu (Malaysia)
144. Niranjan (Sri Lanka)
145. Niranjan Udumalagala
146. Nura Batara (Indonesia)
147. Oh Ei Sun, Sabah
148. Pacto Sarkar (Bangladesh)
149. Patrick Wee, Malaysia
150. Paula Castello
151. Petchiri Lanngpairaj
152. Phet Sayo
153. Polly Guster
154. Preeti Kutch
155. Premesh Chandran
156. R Schiju
157. Rana Ghose (Canada)
158. Rebone Molefe
159. Richard Heeks
160. Rini Nasution (Indonesia)
161. Rodrigo Nogueira de Carvalho, Brasil
162. Rohit Nepali
163. Rukmini Vemraju

164. S Naru (Mauritius)
165. S. Gohilan (Malaysia)
166. Sajan Venniyoor (India)
167. Salman Khalid
168. Sameen Deep Lecha
169. Sarmilla Rai
170. Satish Jung Shahi
171. Save Vour, Fiji
172. Sean Ang (Malaysia)
173. Séan O Siochru
174. Seow Yoke May (Malaysia)
175. Shahani Weerawarana
176. Sharon Bhagwan Rolls, Fiji
177. Shazlina Saari
178. Shikha Shrestha
179. Shilu Shahid
180. Shita Laksmi
181. Somsanouk Phommahaxai, Laos
182. Sonia Mahendran (Malaysia)
183. Sonia Randhawa (Malaysia)
184. Stephen Song
185. Suman Basnet
186. Sumit Awal
187. Sunit Shresthra
188. Surender Rama (India)
189. Swati Sahi (India)
190. Sylvana S Murray (Sierra Leone)
191. Tamara Aqrabawe
192. Tay Khai Guan
193. Theng Lik Tat
194. Tom Pierrin
195. Tony Vetter
196. Tricia Yeoh

197. Uca Silia
198. V Gayathry (Malaysia)
199. Valerie Gordon (Jamaica)
200. Vanessa Gordon (Germany)
201. Walter Chriman (USA)
202. Wirayanti (Indonesia)
203. Yap Yee Yong (Malaysia)
204. Zach Obima (Kenya)
205. Zarah Almeida-Rushworth