



# IPPFoRB

International Panel of Parliamentarians  
for Freedom of Religion or Belief

9 October 2017

The Honorable Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Bin Tun Haji Abdul Razak  
Office of The Prime Minister of Malaysia  
Main Block, Perdana Putra Building  
Federal Government Administrative Centre  
62502, Putrajaya  
Malaysia

Dear Prime Minister Najib:

We write to you as a global network of parliamentarians from diverse political, religious, and geographical backgrounds, committed to the promotion and protection of the freedom of thought, conscience, religion, and belief for all. We would like to respectfully express our concerns about freedom of religion or belief and related human rights in Malaysia, particularly for religious and ethnic minorities.

Malaysian society is enriched by a vibrant history comprised of diverse religious and ethnic communities, many of whom have peacefully lived side-by-side for generations. Yet reports of incidents of religious freedom-related abuses—including restrictions on religious activity, expression, and dissent—are increasing in both number and severity. In August, for example, we were alarmed to learn of the very serious harassment made against members of an atheist organization, including reported death threats. The right not to believe is not “deviant,” but rather it is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We urge you to add Malaysia as a signatory to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to strengthen your country’s commitment to the universal right of freedom of religion or belief for all.

We are similarly concerned by the February 2017 abduction of Pastor Raymond Koh and other individuals whose disappearances may be related to their faith. We encourage your government to support continued and rigorous investigations into the disappearances and consider permitting an independent task force to pursue the cases.

Also, we are following with interest how legal ambiguity between Shari’ah and civil courts, at times, negatively affects religious minorities and limits religious expression. This trend is

evident in cases involving unilateral conversion of children, conversion and religious identity on national identity cards, and bans on the use of the word "Allah" for non-Muslims. Religious minorities often are disadvantaged in legal proceedings, particularly in cases before Shari'ah courts where they have fewer rights.

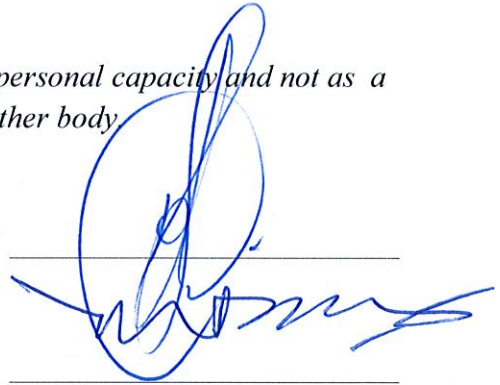
We are encouraged by your country's support for Rohingya Muslims suffering persecution and forced to flee Myanmar, including your strong statements of concern and shipments of humanitarian aid. We hope that you continue to work with your partners in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to press Myanmar to protect this vulnerable community and strongly urge all the Member States to protect Rohingya Muslims currently living within their own borders. This includes signing the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, to which Malaysia is not currently party. Malaysia's rich traditions can only be made stronger by protecting freedom of religion or belief for all religious and ethnic communities.

Sincerely,

*The following parliamentarians support this letter in their personal capacity and not as a representative of their government, political party or any other body.*

Ngabugomzi Kwankeor South Africa

Eva Sundari Indonesia

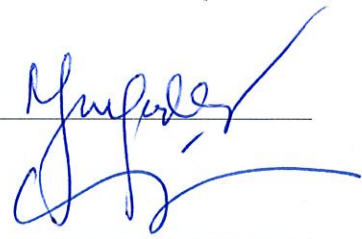


Mardi Seng Cambodia

Mercy Christy Barends Indonesia



CHARLES SAMBARO Malaysia



Lok Mani Dhakal Nepal

TOM VILLARIN PHILS



KASTHURI PATTO MALAYSIA

Kasthuri

Asiya Nasir Pakistan

Asiya Nasir

DR MUHAMMAD ABDUR RAZZAQ Bangladesh

Dr. Muhammad Abdur Razzak

MUTAHID BIN YUSOF MALAYSIA

Mutahid Bin Yusof

KASIT PIROMYA (Trinidad)

Kasit Piromya

DAVID ANDERSON CANADA

David Anderson

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