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SUARA RAKYAT MALAYSIA

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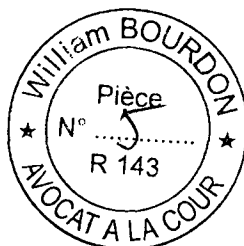
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LABELS

abolish ISA

About Suaram



Vision Statement

To work for a society that is peaceful, free, equal, just and sustainable by a process of empowering people and building a mass movement to uphold human rights.

SUARAM believes that only an active citizen's movement is able to hold the government accountable for its actions. SUARAM's role is to build awareness of human rights that lead to citizen action.

We need to maintain a society which upholds human rights as a basic benchmark because it is the only way in which citizens can be protected against discrimination, corruption, lawlessness and arbitrary abuse of powers. Human rights are safeguards that each of us possess. We wield them to demand accountability. We use them to institute checks and balances in the democratic governance of our society. We depend on them for our liberty.

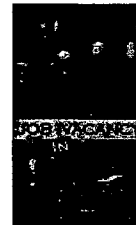
We need to institute a Malaysia steeped in human rights. This includes the right to express oneself; freedom of religion; independence of the judiciary; freedom from abuse of police powers; environmental protection; the right to food, shelter, health and education.

SUARAM is here to stand with you, for human rights, be it your own, a friend's and our society's. Together, let us work for a better and brighter future for Malaysia.

How did SUARAM Begin?

1987 saw one of the most widespread crackdowns on social and political activists in living memory – Operasi Lalang. 106 opposition leaders, social activists, religious teachers and educationists were detained without trial under the draconian Internal Security Act (ISA). Many were detained for up to 2 years.

When the last of the detainees were released in 1989, the Detainees' Family Support Group, ISA detainees and other activists formed 'Suara Rakyat Malaysia' or SUARAM to campaign for the abolition of the ISA. What started as a single-issue campaign evolved into an activist movement for human rights and democracy in the following years. Presently, SUARAM works towards the realisation of fundamental liberties, democracy and justice in Malaysia.



SUARAM VIDEO

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MALAYSIANKINI :: NEWS

10/05/2011

### What does SUARAM mean by Human Rights?

SUARAM is guided by the principles laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 and believes in the universality, interdependence and indivisibility of all rights: civil, political, economic, social and cultural. This means, for example, that the right to genuine development is just as important as it is dependent on the right to freedom of expression. The Malaysian government reaffirmed this stand in various international fora including the 1993 United Nations World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna.

SUARAM specializes in civil and political rights such as freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association; right to fair trial; freedom from torture, extra-judicial killings and cruel punishment; public accountability and genuine democracy-building. Together with other partner NGOs who work on economic, social and cultural rights in Malaysia, we are able to collectively and comprehensively address all human rights.

SUARAM believes in international solidarity and actively supports democracy and human rights movement in the Asian region, in particularly South East Asia.

### Is SUARAM partisan?

SUARAM is an independent, non-profit and non-governmental organisation. We will always be on the side of victims of human rights violations, the poor and the oppressed, without fear or favour. Our mandate is enshrined in the Malaysian Human Rights Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Thus SUARAM's main objective is the protection and realisation of human rights in Malaysia regardless of the government-of-the-day.

### How is SUARAM funded?

SUARAM is funded by donations and grants from public and private sources. However, the most important source comes from private donations, local fund-raising events, sales of books and campaign merchandise. Funds are accepted strictly on the basis of non-interference of donors.

### What does SUARAM do?

#### Police Accountability

One of SUARAM's main area of work is to campaign for police accountability. We handle cases of abuses of police powers, including violent police reaction to peaceful assembly, arbitrary detention of protestors, deaths in custody, and police shootings. SUARAM currently spearheads a campaign to push for the formation of Independent Police Complaints and Misconduct Commission (IPCMC) in an effort to make the police force more accountable and curb abuses of police powers.

#### Right to Trial

SUARAM campaigns for the abolition of draconian laws that allows detention without trial, namely the Internal Security Act (ISA), the Emergency Ordinance (EO) and the Dangerous Drug Act (DDA). SUARAM serves as the secretariat of the Abolish ISA Movement (AIM / GMI) to raise public awareness and build up the movement to repeal the ISA. GMI is actively involved in campaigning and local lobbying. We have come up with campaign materials and organised movie screenings as well as exhibitions. Various other campaign activities include parliamentary lobbying and sending appeal letters to the Prime Minister.

#### Documentation and Monitoring

Much of SUARAM's work is in monitoring and documentation of human rights violations. The work consists of gathering information from victims of human rights abuses, monitoring the media and reporting on political trends. We publish the Malaysia Human Rights Report annually and other human rights related publications and our website [www.suaram.net](http://www.suaram.net) features regular updates. We function as an information centre for human rights issues. Information is compiled, analysed and used for our advocacy work. We organise and participate in fact-finding missions. SUARAM also monitors the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM), to ensure that it serves its functions to promote and protect human rights in Malaysia.

#### Outreach and Events

As part of our effort to reach out to the public, SUARAM's sets up booths during functions, such as conferences and public forums, where we sell our publications and merchandises, and distribute free booklets and leaflets on various human rights issues to the public. We also publish a

biweekly e-newsletter titled "HAK", which means "rights" in Malay. The e-newsletter, which features SUARAM's activities, updates and human rights news, is circulated widely to our friends of SUARAM, local and international NGOs, the media, and embassies.

#### **Human Rights Trainings**

SUARAM conducts regular training on human rights for public members, training on human rights and police powers for organizations and grassroots communities and training for human rights trainers.

#### **Human Rights Support**

SUARAM actively intervenes and supports victims and their families whose basic rights have been violated, especially those from marginalised communities such as the urban poor, students and indigenous peoples. SUARAM releases urgent appeals on Malaysian situation which needs immediate actions; provides legal advice; media assistance and referral services.

#### **Protection of Refugees and Asylum-Seekers**

SUARAM assists refugees in Malaysia as well as facilitates safe passage for other asylum-seekers. We work closely with refugee communities in the country, as well as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). SUARAM documents abuses and violations of human rights of refugees and advocates for policy change and law reform toward the protection of refugees and asylum seekers.

#### **Coalition Building**

SUARAM has an extensive network with other civil society groups involved in human rights, labour, electoral reform, judiciary, gender, environment, freedom of religion, indigenous people, anti-war campaign and other issues of common interest. SUARAM, as a principle, advocates for coalition-building and joint work.

SUARAM also has strong networks and close working relationships with regional and international organisations, such as Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA); Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID), Alternative ASEAN for Burma (ALTSEAN), International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH), World Organization Against Torture (OMCT), Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and, SAPA working group on ASEAN.

#### **International Solidarity**

SUARAM campaigns for human rights in the region, especially in South East Asia. Our priority areas are Burma, Singapore and West Papua.

#### **How does SUARAM operate?**

SUARAM is guided by principles laid out in the Malaysia Human Rights Charters, a charter of basic human rights endorsed by over 50 NGOs and the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948.

An elected Secretariat oversees policy decisions and planning of the organization. SUARAM's work is supplemented by a team of coordinators, project officers and volunteers. The annual general consultation plans and reviews SUARAM programmes and activities. In addition, SUARAM has two regional offices in Northern and Southern Peninsula Malaysia, headed by coordinators and local volunteers.



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