

PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE • 9 MAY 2020

## Lead Malaysia with Consistent Public Health Policies

The Malaysian Health Coalition (MHC) has consistently supported a whole-of-government approach to managing Covid-19. All health and public policies must be consistent and clearly communicated to the Rakyat to ensure that everyone can do their part in fighting Covid-19. These policies must be based on evidence and public health expertise.

In the coming weeks, we urge the following:

**1. Expanded testing strategies**

In our last statement dated [4 May 2020](#) (“Planning for a Phased Restart”), we emphasised expanded testing capacity to include asymptomatic carriers as well as increased contact tracing and isolation capacity. As Malaysia returns to work, the government must provide one clear and non-contradictory position on testing, especially for foreign workers. This clear position must be shared across the Health, Economic, Security and Human Resource agencies, and must consult the private sector and allow them reasonable time to prepare.

**2. Phased restart of public life**

As the economic sector has begun reopening, there will be pressure for the religious, social and educational sectors to quickly follow. However, we urge the government to reopen other sectors in phases. Any planned reopening of other sectors must be preceded by the introduction of strict guidelines and standard operating procedures (SOPs) that are developed alongside medical and public health experts as well as all relevant stakeholders, including state and local governments, religious authorities and the private sector.

**3. Prepare for Hari Raya in the New Normal**

The Rakyat must prepare to adopt new ways of celebrating Hari Raya Aidilfitri that take into account physical distancing and does not involve returning to hometowns (or *balik kampung*). The same must be applied to other festivals that are also soon approaching, such as Hari Gawai and Pesta Kaamatan. We recognise that this may be a difficult reality to accept as it is meant to be a time of celebration and bringing communities closer together, but it is vital that we stay vigilant until Covid-19 is fully eradicated. We urge the government to develop and implement clear communications strategies that educate Malaysians about the importance of the “new normal”, while developing concrete guidelines for all Malaysians.

Covid-19 will not be eradicated until a vaccine is found and distributed throughout the population. It is imperative that the government develop a clear and consistent ultra-long-term strategy, and communicate this to the public.

**BERKHIDMAT UNTUK NEGARA**

**Malaysian Health Coalition**

45 member organisations & 19 individuals

Full Signature List on [myhealthcoalition.org](https://myhealthcoalition.org)

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