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## Report reveals ill treatment of employees with HIV

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** People with HIV can live a long and productive life with medical treatment but there are many who lose their jobs because of stigma and discrimination.

Workplace discrimination made up a third of the 15 complaints documented in the HIV and Human Rights Mitigation Report 2015 by

the Malaysian Aids Council (MAC). Its president Bakhtiar Talhah, who has been living with HIV for the past 21 years, said "this is unacceptable".

A vast majority of these cases, he said, stemmed from ignorance and personal beliefs about HIV.

"Every person living with HIV is entitled to their rights to health and to be free of any form of inhumane and degrading treatment," he said at the launch of the report

in conjunction with Human Rights Day.

Bakhtiar urged business houses and corporations to adopt the Code of Practice on Prevention and Management of HIV/AIDS at the workplace provided by the Occupational Health and Safety Department.

MAC policy manager Fifa Rahman, who authored the report, said many of the complaints last year came mainly from the hospi-

tality, tourism and entertainment industry.

This included a case of a gym attendant who nearly lost his job when a doctor told his employers he had HIV.

"Many of the victims also complained of discrimination of services by the healthcare staff," said Fifa.

She added that there was also a transgender who complained of unsatisfactory police investigation

after an attack by strangers.

She said these cases were resolved after MAC intervened by writing to all parties, including two five-star hotels, the Health Ministry and the police.

Fifa added that this year, the council had also handled complaints of alleged job discrimination by the marine department and navy, as well as a hospital where a doctor reported his own HIV status.