

Headline	End transgender discrimination, says NGO		
MediaTitle	Sunday Mail		
Date	29 Jun 2014	Color	Full Color
Section	News	Circulation	35,000
Page No	13	Readership	105,000
Language	English	ArticleSize	361 cm <sup>2</sup>
Journalist	Vanessa Ee-Lyn Gomes	AdValue	RM 4,125
Frequency	Weekly	PR Value	RM 12,375



# End transgender discrimination, says NGO

By Vanessa Ee-Lyn Gomes

vanessa@mmail.com

**K**UALA LUMPUR — The transgender community should not be discriminated against but be treated like everyone else, a non-governmental organisation said yesterday.

Malaysian AIDS Council (MAC) president Datuk Dr Raj Karim said they should not be harassed or ridiculed, especially by the authorities, as they were “made that way”.

“It is not something which they had asked for. There is no need to harass or ridicule them,” she said.

“If a transgender was involved in a theft, bribery or corruption, then there is a right for them to be arrested.”

She urged the public to be more receptive of transgenders in the country.

Raj was referring to the detention of 17 transgender women during a raid by Negri

Sembilan Islamic Department at a wedding in Bahau earlier this month.

The 17 were detained for violating a shariah law ban on cross-dressing and were subsequently charged and sentenced under Section 66 of the state’s Shariah Criminal Enactment 1992.

Raj said there were 17 HIV discriminatory cases which were brought to the MAC’s attention. This was revealed by the council in its HIV and Human Rights Mitigation Report 2013, in conjunction with International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking recently.

Two of the cases highlighted were from educational institutions where the diploma certificate of a student infected with HIV was withheld, while in the other case, an administrative staff commented those with HIV were not able to secure

scholarships.

“These 17 cases occurred last year but we believe it is just the tip of the iceberg,” said Raj.

“We believe there are more of such cases but people tend to keep quiet about it or do not know who to approach.”

She said the council had been working with the Health Ministry and the Women, Family and Community Ministry to help curb the rise of HIV transmission.

“We cannot reach the public by ourselves. With the help from the ministries, we can reach a wider spectrum of the society.”

She said with help from the ministries, they would be able to provide education for safe and healthy sex, especially among teenagers and sex workers.

“We will focus on high risk areas and groups that are more vulnerable to these issues as well as discrimination,” she said.



Raj (centre) says authorities should not harass or ridicule transgenders for being ‘who they are’.