

Headline	Council Student told to explain HIV infection or be barred		
MediaTitle	The Star		
Date	27 Jun 2014	Color	Black/white
Section	Nation	Circulation	288,916
Page No	25	Readership	866,748
Language	English	ArticleSize	148 cm <sup>2</sup>
Journalist	N/A	AdValue	RM 3,538
Frequency	Daily	PR Value	RM 10,614



## Council: Student told to explain HIV infection or be barred

**KUALA LUMPUR:** A university dean allegedly asked a student to explain in a letter how he contracted HIV failing which he would be barred from graduating.

The Malaysian AIDS Council said this was among 17 cases of alleged discrimination against people living with HIV (PLHIV) that the MAC had compiled in its *HIV & Human Rights Mitigation Report 2013: Paving the Road to Zero Discrimination*.

MAC president Datuk Dr Raj Abdul Karim launched the report, funded by the European Union Asian Action grant and the council's *Support. Don't Punish* campaign here yesterday.

The student claimed the dean had also asked who his hostel mate was and what the "risky behaviours" he had participated in to get HIV.

He alleged that if he did not see the dean and the top level manage-

ment (of the university), they would block his convocation.

"This would mean that I wouldn't get my diploma as well," the report quoted him as saying.

The report said the diploma was released only after the MAC sought the help of then Deputy Higher Education Minister Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah. The case involving the student, identified only as FF, from a university here, was one of two cases reported on alleged educational discrimination against PLHIV. The others pertained to allegations of anti-retroviral withheld in police custody, drugs planted by enforcement staff and employees' job contract withheld or dismissed.

The report conceded, however, that advancements in HIV treatment had enabled PLHIV to be able to work, study, play and participate in

social activities without any impact on their productivity or interaction with others.

HIV could not be transmitted via skin-to-skin contact or through everyday social interaction, it said.

Dr Raj said the cases that came to the attention of the council were just the tip of the iceberg, expressing concern that discrimination could dampen efforts to eliminate AIDS.

"Many are suffering in silence as they tend to think it is their fate," she said, adding that the MAC wanted to highlight the complaints that had violated basic rights to jobs, health-care and equal treatment.

Dr Raj said the MAC would work with the Education Ministry towards removing the HIV status from university application and scholarship forms while educating university staff about issues such as confidentiality and discrimination.