



FAMILY FRONTIERS

# *FAMILY FRONTIERS 2024 ANNUAL REPORT*



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# *President's Message*

**Dear Family Frontiers Members and Supporters,**

As I reflect on my first term as President of Family Frontiers, I am filled with immense gratitude for the unwavering support of our community and the collective strides we made together in 2024. This year brought significant milestones, alongside challenges that have only strengthened our resolve to champion the rights of Malaysian families.

One of the key highlights of 2024 was the passing of the long-awaited constitutional amendment to the law. The Constitution (Amendment) Bill 2024 marked a historic moment for gender equality in Malaysia. Once implemented, it will allow children born overseas to Malaysian mothers and foreign fathers to qualify for automatic citizenship—rights that were previously granted only to children of Malaysian fathers. This amendment is a monumental step forward, as it corrects decades of discrimination against Malaysian women. For future mothers, this means they will be able to ensure their children have access to Malaysian citizenship without the lengthy and often uncertain application process.

While this represents a colossal step forward, we recognize it was not without its shortcomings. The amendment was not made retrospective, leaving many families who have been fighting alongside us from the very beginning—still waiting for justice. Furthermore, there was an unfortunate bundling of regressive amendments alongside this progressive change.

We also witnessed crucial developments in the Suriani Kempe court case, which has been a cornerstone of our advocacy. These proceedings reaffirmed the importance of our cause, as we reached a settlement with the government. This resolution is a testament to the power of persistence and the voices of those who refuse to be silenced.

As we look ahead to 2025, my hope for Family Frontiers and our community remains steadfast. Together, we will strengthen our vital work on marriage migration, advocating for policies that reflect the realities and needs of binational families. We will remain vigilant in monitoring and ensuring the effective implementation of the amendments, pushing for clarity and fairness at every step. Importantly, we will continue to stand by and support adult children who have been left behind, recognizing their struggles and amplifying their voices.

Let us move forward with courage and determination, knowing that each step we take brings us closer to a more inclusive and just society. Thank you for your trust and unwavering commitment—together, we are the heartbeat of this movement.

**With hope and solidarity,  
Adlyn Adam Teoh  
President, Family Frontiers Malaysia**





# *Executive Director's Message*

## **Reflections on 2024 and the Road Ahead**

Reflecting on this past year fills me with immense pride and gratitude.

First, we witnessed a historic moment—the constitutional amendment that finally granted Malaysian mothers equal rights to confer citizenship to their children. This was a prospective change, but its impact is truly profound.

Then, the court decision that followed gave Malaysian mothers the ability to register their children's citizenship retrospectively. While I don't want to steal the shine from Suri, Adlyn, the five appellants, and the legal team, it was truly a landmark victory that has changed the lives of so many.

2024 was also a year we stepped into bigger arenas—with the team representing and speaking for Family Frontiers at regional and global platforms.

Personally, one of the most meaningful moments for me was attending the CEDAW Review in Geneva. Having contributed to the Alternative Report in 2012 and 2018, being there in person in 2024 felt like coming full circle.

But beyond policy wins and global stages, what touched me most was the human impact of our work, and the direction it's now taking. We have not just changed policy—we have changed lives.

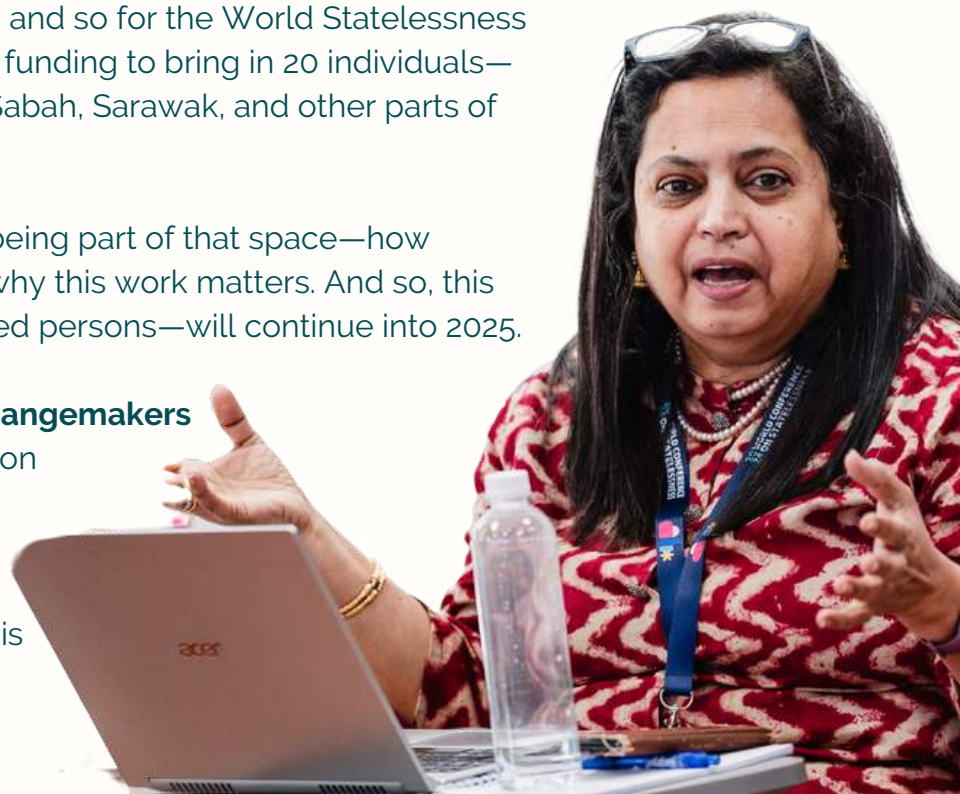
### **1. Centering Lived Experiences**

The strength of the mothers' campaign came from their courage to share their own stories. We recognized this, and so for the World Statelessness Conference, we pitched and secured funding to bring in 20 individuals—many directly impacted, some from Sabah, Sarawak, and other parts of West Malaysia.

Seeing how much they gained from being part of that space—how empowered they felt—reminded us why this work matters. And so, this direction—capacity building of affected persons—will continue into 2025.

### **2. Nurturing a New Generation of Changemakers**

The campaign took an emotional toll on many mothers. In response, we brought together a group of young communications professionals who wanted to understand and support this cause.





What started as a small pilot last year blossomed into something bigger. In 2024, we organized a two-day workshop bringing together youth and impacted individuals at IYC.

It was powerful to see them connect, to watch these young voices speak up for change. This youth and impact-led advocacy will be another key direction for us moving forward.

### **3. Expanding Our Work on Marriage Migration**

We always knew the challenges, but this year we took a deeper dive. We visited semi-urban areas, remote communities in West Malaysia, Sabah, and Sarawak—including a kampung with nearly 1,000 undocumented individuals.

It was a humbling lesson in privilege. I used to say Immigration was my second home—but it was just a 20km drive for me. In contrast, families in these areas travel hundreds of kilometers just to renew a visa or passport.

That's how many fall through the cracks—how statelessness becomes intergenerational. We're now stepping up our work in this space, to address the root causes of statelessness.

### **4. Implementation, Monitoring, and Accountability**

Of course, our work doesn't end with the amendment. In fact, it's just the beginning. We will continue to monitor and track the implementation of these reforms, ensuring that no one is left behind in the system.

### **5. My Deepest Thanks**

To the Malaysian mothers, for your relentless advocacy and bravery.

To the Malaysian public, for your solidarity.

To SUHAKAM, MCRA, our international partners.

To the cross party MPs and Senators for your unanimous vote.

And to the EXCO—thank you for your unwavering support.

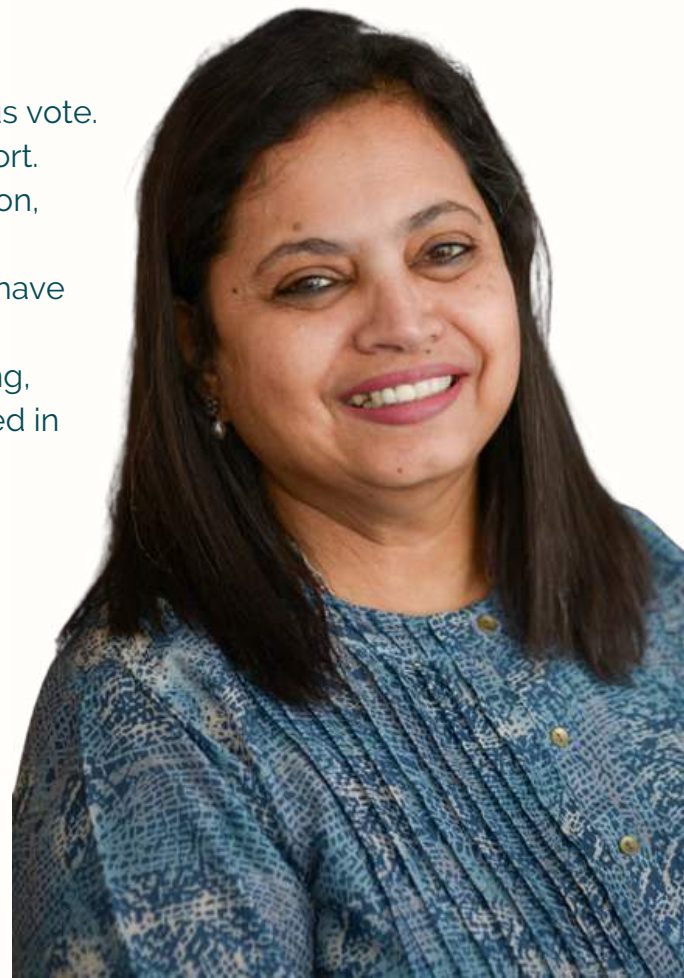
To the Family Frontiers dream team—your insane passion, your commitment, your fire—you got us here.

It's been an exhilarating ride, and I feel truly blessed to have witnessed this legislative reform in my lifetime.

And as we look to 2025—we know the road ahead is long, but it's also bright. Because we've built something rooted in lived experience, collective power, and purpose.

**Thank you, from the bottom of my heart.**

**Bina Ramanand,  
Executive Director and Co-founder,  
Family Frontiers**



# *Messages of Hope from Our Community*

"I came to Malaysia when I was 17, young and hopeful. For as long as I remember, I had always wanted to make it big. To make my family proud but also for the betterment of people, far and near.

But when I graduated - at the top of my class - a harsh reality hit me. Although as a foreign spouse I did not require a company-sponsored visa, a barrage of rejections came my way. I didn't know at the time that foreign hires in financial institutions needed to be approved by Bank Negara. Fresh graduates who were foreigners hardly stood a chance.

I decided to go back to university and get a Master's degree - in a field that Malaysia deems high-priority, Islamic finance. I thought this would help. But it didn't, since on paper I was still a foreigner. And so my struggle continued.

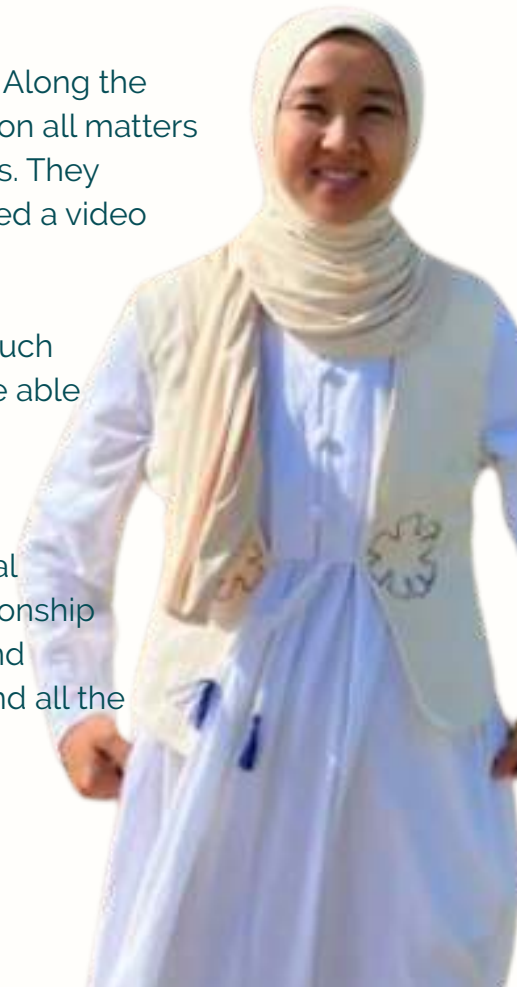
I applied for permanent residence in 2015 after five years of marriage and was rejected after five years of waiting, with no explanation given. I appealed in 2020 and, after another four years, received a positive decision.

All in all, 15 years into my Malaysian marriage I am finally a PR. Along the way, Family Frontiers has been my pillar of support - advising on all matters of bureaucracy and encouraging during moments of weakness. They featured my case in their campaign presentations and produced a video interview for my family as well.

Honestly, at this point, I don't know if being a PR makes that much of a difference to me in terms of my career. I probably won't be able to go back to the corporate world. I may continue working on my own, regardless of inherent limitations.

I am relieved though about not having to deal with visa renewal anymore. I am also glad that this will no longer strain the relationship with my husband or our family dynamic. I praise the Creator and thank Family Frontiers for everything they have done for me and all the foreign spouses in Malaysia."

**Gulzhan, a non-citizen spouse of a Malaysian**



"My name is Li Li, and I am a Malaysian engineer from Johor Bahru. I lived in Milan as a single mother, raising my daughter—who, despite being my child, was not recognized as a Malaysian citizen.

In 2017, I gave birth in Italy after a previous miscarriage, following my doctor's advice not to travel. Before my delivery, I reached out to the Malaysian Embassy, and they assured me that my child could obtain Malaysian citizenship. But after submitting her application under Article 15(2) of the Federal Constitution, years passed with no response. Eventually, I had no choice but to let her take her father's nationality.

Life as a single mother in a foreign country was hard enough, but the challenges of raising a child without my own nationality were overwhelming. During the pandemic, I had to turn down repatriation because my daughter would only receive a 30-day visa. Later, when I tested positive for Covid-19, I was terrified—if something happened to me, what would become of her?

After years of uncertainty, I finally received the news I had been waiting for—my daughter was granted Malaysian citizenship last year. With immense relief and gratitude, we have now moved back to Malaysia to start anew. I am deeply thankful to the government for recognizing our struggle and to Family Frontiers for their support in this journey. No mother should have to fight for her child's right to belong, and I hope that all Malaysian mothers will one day have equal rights in passing down their citizenship."

**Li Li, a Malaysian mother impacted by gender-unequal citizenship laws**



*A photo of Li Li and her daughter (blurred to protect her privacy and security)*



## *A Year in Review*

The year 2024, marked a significant chapter in Family Frontiers' long and unwavering advocacy for equal citizenship rights. After years of tireless campaigning, legal battles, and the collective action by Malaysian mothers, the law to grant Malaysian women rights to confer citizenship to their overseas born children was finally realised.

**This amendment ensures that future generations of Malaysian women are no longer discriminated against in their ability to confer citizenship to their children.**

At the heart of our work has been the resilience of the women who have been fighting for this fundamental right. In the face of adversity, these mothers have boldly stepped forward, putting themselves in vulnerable situations for something that should be a fundamental birthright – the right for their children to call the land their mothers call home, 'tanah air'. Their unwavering courage has fuelled this movement, as they shared their personal stories and took to the streets, demanding equal treatment for their children and justice for all Malaysian women.

Throughout the year, we not only celebrated this monumental victory, but we also kept our focus on the broader fight for gender-equal nationality laws. The passing of the amendment was a major victory, but it was never the end of the journey.







With continued collaboration and active engagement with key stakeholders, including the government, grassroots organizations, and global allies, we worked to ensure that the victory would translate into meaningful change on the ground. The dialogue surrounding statelessness and gender discrimination in nationality laws continued to evolve, and Family Frontiers remained at the forefront, pushing for further reforms that would benefit all families impacted by these laws.

One of the most significant moments in our journey this year was our involvement in the 2024 World Conference on Statelessness. Co-organizing this global event with partners from around the world gave us the opportunity to showcase the struggles faced by Malaysian mothers to a wider, international audience. The conference not only served as a platform for raising awareness but also highlighted the importance of solidarity and collective action in achieving lasting change. Through various interactive exhibits, panel discussions, and workshops, we brought attention to the bureaucratic hurdles faced by binational families, reinforcing the need for reform.

Our work was not limited to global platforms – we also focused on building local capacity and empowering the next generation of advocates. Our youth engagement initiatives and collaborations with civil society organizations provided young leaders with the tools and knowledge to continue the fight for citizenship equality. By bringing together activists, students, and allies, we ensured that the movement would continue to grow, reaching new audiences and inspiring future leaders to stand up for justice.

**As we look ahead to 2025, we remain committed to furthering our mission. While the victory of 2024 represents a critical step forward, it is not the end. There is still work to be done – both in ensuring the full implementation of the amendment and in continuing to challenge the remaining regressive elements of Malaysia's nationality laws.**

2024 was a year of celebration, but also a year of reflection. We acknowledge the hard work, passion, and sacrifices made by countless individuals and organizations that stood by us in this journey. Together, we have created a legacy of change that will echo through generations to come. But our work is not finished. With your support, we will continue to advocate for every child of a Malaysian parent, working toward a future where citizenship is no longer seen as a privilege but a fundamental right to belong.



# KEY HIGHLIGHTS IN 2024







**FF at the World Conference on Statelessness 2024**



**Our engagement at the 88th CEDAW Session**



**'Ibu Merdeka Buat Ibu Pertiwi': A Merdeka Celebration for Malaysian Mothers & Children**



**Malaysian women's equal rights to confer citizenship to their children born abroad recognised by Malaysian Parliament**



**Petition and Flower Handover to the Minister of Women, Family and Community Development**



## *Parliamentary Engagement: #PindaPerkara14UntukIbu in Action*

### **Malaysian Women Secure Equal Citizenship Rights!: A win for Some, Not for All**

After more than six years of relentless campaigning, what once seemed like an uphill battle became a reality. On October 17, 2024, the Constitution (Amendment) Bill 2024 was passed, finally rectifying over 60 years of gender discrimination by granting Malaysian women the right to confer citizenship to their children born abroad.

**"With this amendment, we can all go back to our families and proudly tell our daughters that, "I, as a mother or father, was involved in drafting this law and successfully granted women the right to citizenship."**

— YB Hannah Yeoh, Minister of Youth and Sports, from her speech during the debate on the Citizenship Amendment



*Family Frontiers with the Minister of Home Affairs, YB Dato' Sri Saifuddin bin Abdullah*

With overwhelming support in the lower house, the amendment was passed with 206 MPs voting in favor and only one opposing. Over the course of a two-day debate, 70 parliamentarians took the floor, all voicing their support for granting Malaysian women the same citizenship rights as men.



*Family Frontiers with YB Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution (Minister of Home Affairs), YB Datuk Nur Jazlan Mohamed (Deputy Speaker for the Upper House of the Malaysian Parliament), YB Senator Datuk Seri Zurainah Musa, YB Senator Datin Hajah Ros Suryati, and Pn Mimmi from the Ministry of Home Affairs*

With the amendment passed in the Lower House, the next step was its tabling and debate in the upper house of Parliament. On 3 December 2024, the Senate unanimously voted in its favor, completing the parliamentary process of this long-overdue reform. With this milestone achieved, the final stages of implementation remain. Our hope is that the amendment will be fully implemented by the end of 2025, ensuring that Malaysian mothers of the future can finally exercise their right to confer citizenship to their overseas-born children.

While the amendment marks a historic breakthrough, it is not without its shortcomings, particularly, its failure to apply retroactively. This means that many children of Malaysian mothers, born before the reform, remain in limbo.



This reform is a testament to the unyielding spirit of Malaysian mothers who refused to be silenced, the allies who stood beside them, and the movement that transformed hope into lasting action. It is more than just a legislative victory for gender equality—it is a step towards a more just and equitable Malaysia, and the beginning of a new chapter for the Malaysian family unit. Family Frontiers pledges to continue this journey, ensuring that every child of a Malaysian parent, whether biological or adopted, can secure citizenship in a reasonable time frame, regardless of the gender or marital status of the parents or the child's place of birth.

### **Kamar Khas (Special Chambers)**

In the ongoing effort to improve the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill prior to its tabling, Family Frontiers engaged with parliamentary mechanisms, including the Kamar Khas (Special Chambers), to spotlight the proposed revocation of citizenship for non-citizen spouses and push for necessary safeguards. Family Frontiers engaged YB Wong Chen who presented the issue during a Kamar Khas session.



*Family Frontiers and YB Wong Chen After the Kamar Khas (Special Chambers) Session*

The provision sought to replace the term “date of marriage” with “date of obtaining citizenship” in determining the status of foreign women married to Malaysian men. If passed, this amendment would mean that a non-citizen wife who divorces within two years of acquiring Malaysian citizenship risks having her citizenship revoked. Given that Malaysia does not permit dual nationality, such a provision could render these women stateless, forcing them into a precarious legal limbo. Worse still, it could trap women in abusive marriages, fearing that leaving their spouse would mean losing their legal status and rights.



During the Special Chamber session, YB Wong Chen raised these concerns, seeking clarity and pushing for safeguards that protect the rights of non-citizen spouses. Family Frontiers remains steadfast in our commitment to challenging provisions that threaten the dignity and security of women and families. We will continue to advocate for a citizenship framework that is gender-sensitive and family-friendly in accordance with international human rights standards.

### **Direct Engagement with Members of Parliament**

Family Frontiers has consistently utilised parliamentary mechanisms to push for policy change, with one of the most effective strategies being direct engagement with MPs to raise critical questions in Parliament. In 2024, we engaged with approximately 55 targeted MPs to bring attention to gender-discriminatory citizenship laws and immigration policies that affect Malaysian binational families. A total of 83 questions were raised in Parliament, pressing the government for clarity on the timeline for tabling the amendment to grant Malaysian mothers equal citizenship rights, the status of citizenship applications for their children, and potential reforms to immigration policies to safeguard non-citizen spouses of Malaysians. These efforts ensured that the issue remained a national priority and reinforced the demand for greater government accountability for Malaysian binational families.

### **All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia - Children's Right (APPGM-CR)**

As part of Family Frontiers' efforts to expand our parliamentary engagement, we partnered with Voice of Children (VoC) to establish the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Children's Rights (APPG-CR) on 22 October 2024. This initiative marks a significant milestone in bridging the gap between civil society organizations (CSOs) and policymakers, creating a dedicated platform where pressing issues concerning children's rights can be addressed on a legislative level.

In this endeavor, Family Frontiers serves as the implementing partner, while VoC acts as the secretariat. Additionally, FF is an official partner within the APPG-CR, reinforcing our commitment to advocating for policies that safeguard and uplift children, including those from our community of Malaysian binational families. The APPG-CR will play a crucial role in fostering collaboration between CSOs and Members of Parliament, ensuring that children's rights remain a national priority and that meaningful legislative reforms are pursued.

## *Strategic Litigation: Case of Suriani Kempe & Ors vs Government of Malaysia & Ors*

The Suriani Kempe case filed by Family Frontiers and six Malaysian mothers at the Kuala Lumpur High Court to challenge Malaysia's discriminatory citizenship laws, seeking an interpretation of the Federal Constitution to grant Malaysian women equal rights to confer citizenship on their overseas-born children in December 2020, was finally heard at the Federal Court on 10 December 2024.

During the hearing, the panel suggested exploring a settlement. In response, FF's lawyers engaged in discussions, and the court set a review date for 27 January. However, this was later postponed to allow further negotiations, ensuring that any settlement provides meaningful protection for mothers left out of the constitutional amendment.



*Family Frontiers, Malaysian Mothers and our Lawyers After the Settlement*

On 10 March 2025, a historic settlement was reached, bringing long-overdue relief to overseas-born children of Malaysian mothers who were excluded from the recent Constitution (Amendment) Act 2024. While the amendment granted Malaysian women the right to confer citizenship on their future children, it was not applied retroactively—leaving those born before its passage in legal limbo. Through this settlement, Malaysian mothers have the right to obtain Malaysian citizenship for their children born abroad.

## *Capacity Building: Empowering Malaysian Mothers to Self-advocate for Gender-equal Citizenship Rights*

In 2024, Family Frontiers continued to build the confidence of Malaysian mothers and their children to advocate for gender-equal citizenship rights. As momentum grew around the constitutional amendment, more mothers stepped forward, finding their voices and actively engaging in the campaign.

While our internal capacity-building efforts within the community remained a priority, we also sought to expand our outreach and connect with those beyond our existing network. To achieve this, we organised a webinar for Malaysians overseas, reaching impacted mothers abroad who had not yet engaged with us. Additionally, we facilitated a session with Russian spouses of Malaysians, providing guidance on navigating immigration procedures as foreign spouses.

### **Navigating Visas, Passes, Employment and PR for Russian Spouses in Malaysia, 27 January 2024**

Family Frontiers, in collaboration with the Russian Women's Association in Malaysia, organised a dedicated session to address the challenges faced by Russian spouses of Malaysians. This session stemmed from direct outreach by the Russian women's community, who sought support in navigating Malaysia's complex immigration and employment policies. Their concerns highlighted the urgent need for a platform to discuss these issues and seek solutions.



During the session, Family Frontiers' Lead Coordinator shed light on the systemic hurdles non-citizen spouses encounter, particularly in securing visas, employment, and permanent residency. She explained that while non-citizen spouses can apply for a Long-Term Social Visit Pass (LTSVP) for 1 to 5 years, gaining the right to work requires an endorsement from the Immigration Department, contingent on a job offer and employer support. Meanwhile, the path to permanent residency remains uncertain, often taking years and depending on factors like marriage duration and community ties.



*Family Frontiers, a representative from the Russian House and representatives from the Russian Women's Association in Malaysia at the session*

### One-on-One Coaching Sessions

Family Frontiers continued coaching Malaysian mothers prior to making interventions on national television, radio, newspapers, and public outreach events, enabling them to confidently share their stories on public platforms. As impacted mothers also actively participated in lobbying efforts, briefings, and engagement sessions with Ministers, Members of Parliament and Government Agencies, these sessions were crucial in ensuring that mothers felt safe and confident prior to their intervention.

### Keeping the Community Engaged & Informed Through Campaign Update Calls

Family Frontiers values our community and believes in keeping Malaysian mothers at the heart of the #PindaPerkara14UntukIbu Campaign. Throughout the campaign, we made it a priority to consult and engage with them regularly. These Zoom calls, organized following any significant updates, provided a space for mothers in Malaysia and abroad to stay informed, ask questions, and help shape our next steps in the advocacy. More than just an update, these sessions ensured that their voices remained central to the movement.

### Malaysian Mothers Email & Phone Call Campaign | November - December 2024

Following the passing of the mother's amendment in the lower house of Parliament, Family Frontiers mobilized 16 Malaysian mothers to take action by emailing Senators, urging them to support the reform when it reached the upper house. Their voices made an impact—during FF's engagement with Senators, Senator Rita Sarimah acknowledged receiving some of these emails, reinforcing the urgency of the issue and the need for this reform. On 3 December 2024, the amendment was unanimously passed in the Senate, marking a historic victory for Malaysian women.

### Citizenship Debate Watch, 17 October & 3 December 2024

Family Frontiers organised two livestream watch sessions, bringing together around 150 Malaysian mothers, national allies, and global partners to witness the parliamentary debates and votes on the constitutional amendment. These live streams were more than just viewings—they were spaces for collective solidarity.

For many mothers, this was their first time witnessing parliamentary debates and the legislative process in action. By creating this space, Family Frontiers not only provided them with real-time access to the decision-making process but also encouraged them to engage more actively in Malaysia's civic and political landscape.

## *Shaping Policies Through Research, Advocacy & UN Engagement*

Family Frontiers undertook two key research projects in 2024:

### 1) A Report: Permanent Residence Delays, Citizenship Barriers, and New Risks Under the 2024 Constitutional Amendment

This report looked into the challenges faced by non-citizen spouses of Malaysian citizens in obtaining the Permanent Residence (PR) status, with a particular focus on the implications of the Constitution (Amendment) Bill 2024. Using a combination of focus group discussions and a survey, insights were gathered from 177 non-citizen spouses. The report details the inaccessibility of permanent residency (PR) and its resulting impacts on the lives of binational families in Malaysia, and concludes with policy recommendations.



A REPORT: **PERMANENT RESIDENCE DELAYS, CITIZENSHIP BARRIERS, AND NEW RISKS UNDER THE 2024 CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT**



FAMILY FRONTIERS

**About Family Frontiers:** Family Frontiers is a registered entity established with the aim of advancing, promoting, and strengthening the family unit so that no family is left behind; it acts as an umbrella body for the Foreign Spouses Support Group (FSSG) which supports and advocates for the welfare of Malaysian binational families, and mobilises action for the Malaysian Campaign for Equal Citizenship.

## 2) Navigating Borders, Barriers, and Belonging: The Lived Experiences of Non-Citizen Wives in Malaysia

With grant support from APWLD to participate in a multi-country research aimed at assessing issues, policies and practices affecting the human rights of women marriage migrants in Asia, Family Frontiers conducted research between July - November 2024. The research aimed to examine the legal framework and policies governing marriage migrants, and the specific challenges faced by non-citizen wives through the lens of their lived experiences. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, engaging 62 non-citizen wives across 11 states and one Federal Territory in both in-person and online focus group discussions. Additionally, 89 non-citizen wives from across the country participated in an online survey designed to collect quantitative data. Preliminary findings of this research was shared at the 4th Asia-Pacific Feminist Forum in September, together with research partners from Taiwan, South Korea, and Indonesia. The full report is expected to be launched in 2025.



*Focus Group Discussions with Women Marriage Migrants*

### Malaysia's Fourth Universal Periodic Review (UPR)

In January, Malaysia reported on its progress of human rights in the country for the Universal Periodic Review for the period of November 2018 to October 2023 and received 11 recommendations on nationality rights and 10 recommendations on statelessness. In May, our Research & Policy Coordinator, as part of the COMANGO group, attended a consultation organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This meeting was held together with government ministries and agencies, in preparation for the adoption of the UPR review outcomes. Civil society groups were given space to make interventions, urging the government to accept pertinent recommendations.

### Advancing Gender Equality and Nationality Rights through CEDAW

In the lead up to the 88th Session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), during which Malaysia will undergo a review, Family Frontiers was invited to several engagements by the Ministry of Women, Family, and Community Development (KPWKM) with civil society, which included a mock session of the constructive dialogue.





*Family Frontiers' CEDAW Related Interventions*

In April, Family Frontiers, in collaboration with Nationality for All (NFA), the Statelessness and Dignified Citizenship Coalition, Asia Pacific (SDCC-AP), the Global Campaign for Equal Nationality Rights (GCENR), Equality Now, and the Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion (ISI), submitted an **additional report** for Malaysia's review.

A few weeks before Malaysia's CEDAW review, Family Frontiers hosted a briefing with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) for activists from national women's rights organizations preparing for the session. They came together to learn best practices for effectively engaging with the CEDAW process and shared insights for strengthening their upcoming interventions.

In the following weeks, we once again partnered with the OHCHR and the European Delegation in Malaysia to host a follow-up engagement session, bringing together activists from other national civil society organizations. This session aimed to equip Malaysian civil society with strategies to navigate and leverage UN mechanisms for advocacy.



In May, our Lead Coordinator, Bina Ramanand, attended the review session in Geneva, where she took part in a closed-door lunchtime briefing with civil society groups and delivered an oral intervention. The Concluding Observations that followed included robust recommendations from the Committee, which called on Malaysia to amend the Federal Constitution to grant Malaysian women equal nationality rights, withdraw restrictive citizenship amendments, resolve 14,000 pending citizenship applications for children in special circumstances by 2024, and accede to international conventions on statelessness.



*Family Frontiers Executive Director's Intervention at the 88<sup>th</sup> CEDAW Session in Geneva*

## Reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

Family Frontiers made two submissions to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) for the 100th pre-session; the national alternative report by civil society organisations under the Child Rights Coalition Malaysia (CRCM), and a joint report together with Advocates for Non-discrimination and Access to Knowledge (ANAK), Borneo Komrad, Iskul Sama diLaut Omadal (Iskul), Buku Jalanan Chow Kit, Yayasan Chow Kit, Development of Human Resources for Rural Areas (DHRRA), Elom Initiatives (Elom), Nationality for All (NFA), Global Campaign for Equal Nationality Rights (GCENR), Equality Now, Child Identity Protection (CHIP), and Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion (ISI).

In preparation for the national alternative report, our Lead Coordinator, Research & Policy Coordinator and Case Coordinator participated in the focus group discussions (FGDs) organised by members of CRCM. They attended the FGDs on Education and Separation from Parents & Family Reunification, providing written inputs on the challenges faced by children impacted by gender-discriminatory citizenship laws and statelessness in these areas. The Family Frontiers team also facilitated the FGD on Citizenship, Childhood Statelessness and Birth Registration for CRCM together with DHRRA, ANAK and Lawyer Kamek 4 Change. There were 15 participants from both West and East Malaysia, comprising activists, stateless and formerly stateless individuals, and NGOs. The input and content from the FGD were compiled into a 'reporting back table' covering a myriad of issues, and submitted to CRCM to be incorporated into the final report.



## Engagement with the UN Working Group on Discrimination Against Women & Girls

GCENR organised an online briefing for Family Frontiers with the new members of the UN Working Group on Discrimination Against Women and Girls, where we had the opportunity to update the Working Group (WG) on the situation of the constitutional reform at that time. After the call we sent a follow up letter, which resulted in the WG issuing and publishing a communication to the Government of Malaysia.



## *Public Outreach & Stakeholder Collaboration: Garnering Support Fostering Solidarity*

To grow our circle of allies and keep the momentum alive, Family Frontiers spent the year strengthening ties with partners nationally and globally. Whether it was pushing for the reform for Malaysian mothers or calling for fairer immigration policies, these collaborations brought heart, strategy, and solidarity to our work.

### **COLLABORATIONS WITH MINISTRIES, MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT, POLITICAL PARTIES AND POLICYMAKERS**

#### **Engagement with the Human Rights Commission in Sarawak, 26 August 2024**

As part of the Multi-country Research on Women Marriage Migrants, Family Frontiers carried out a series of engagements in East Malaysia to ensure that voices and concerns from the region were meaningfully included in national-level conversations. One key visit was to SUHAKAM Sarawak, where we held a focused discussion on the specific challenges faced by foreign wives and stateless individuals living in the state—particularly in rural and border areas.

The engagement allowed us to present emerging findings from our fieldwork and gather crucial input from the SUHAKAM Commissioners and officers, who provided insight into local realities and recurring gaps in policy implementation. We also explored how SUHAKAM could play a stronger role in monitoring and advocating for the rights of affected communities, particularly in supporting legal identity and access to services.



*Family Frontiers and SUHAKAM Sarawak*



*Family Frontiers, Malaysian mothers and children during the petition and rose handover*

### **Petition & Flower Handover to the Minister of Women, Family and Community Development (KPWKM), 25 September 2024**

This engagement was a deliberate and strategic move, born out of a moment when things had gone quiet—the status of the constitutional amendment was unclear, and it felt like we had exhausted every advocacy tool in our belt just to keep the momentum alive. The idea for this actually came out of a brainstorming session with a coach who was guiding us through a digital advocacy fellowship. We wanted to try something different, something less confrontational but still impactful—something that could spark warmth and connection, while sending a clear message.

With that, Family Frontiers arranged a meeting with YB Dato' Sri Nancy Shukri, the Minister of Women, Family, and Community Development (KPWKM), where we handed over our petition signed by over 50,000 Malaysians, along with roses from the mothers and children who have been impacted by Malaysia's gender-discriminatory citizenship laws. It was a softer, more symbolic gesture, meant to open doors rather than push them down.

This engagement gave Family Frontiers, Malaysian mothers and their children a valuable platform to speak from the heart and to share the lived experiences of mothers and their children who are still denied equal rights. We spoke candidly about the barriers they face and called on the Ministry to take firm steps toward realising the reform.

### **'Ibu Merdeka buat Ibu Pertiwi', an independence day celebration for Malaysia mothers and their children, 21 September 2024**

In honour of the growing number of children of Malaysian mothers who were finally receiving their citizenship approvals, Family Frontiers organised a celebration for the community in conjunction with Merdeka and Malaysia Day. While the event was a joyful one, marking freedom, belonging, and long-overdue recognition, it also served as a subtle reminder of the many mothers and children still left waiting, still hoping for the day they too can call Malaysia home.





What made this gathering especially significant was the presence of senior officials from the Ministry of Home Affairs (KDN)—YBhg. Datuk Haji Makhzan bin Mahyuddin, Deputy Secretary General, and Puan Mimmi Suriati binti Mat Khalid, Assistant Department Head at the National Registration Department— who joined the celebration and delivered a speech on behalf of the Minister. Their attendance reaffirmed the Ministry's commitment to resolving pending citizenship cases and moving forward on gender-equal nationality reforms—something many families in the room had been waiting years to hear.



This year, we also took a different approach by inviting two inspiring young women, Sarrah Salihan and Ain Husniza, to speak. Both are youth leaders who voiced solidarity with the Malaysian mothers affected by the law, and powerfully expressed concern that they too might face the same struggle if they chose to marry non-citizens.





The event concluded with a launching of paper planes into the air—each one a symbol of freedom, of hope, and of the dreams these families still carry. The celebration, Ibu Merdeka buat Ibu Pertiwi, resonated far and wide, receiving widespread media attention and helping to keep the spotlight on this ongoing struggle for justice.



*Malaysian mothers, children and representatives from Home Ministry flying paper planes*

## COLLABORATIONS WITH ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

### **Asia Research Centre X SUHAKAM Lecture 'Human Rights and Statelessness in Peninsular Malaysia', 23 January 2024**

In collaboration with the Asia Research Centre (ARC) and the Malaysian Human Rights Commission (SUHAKAM), Family Frontiers' Research & Policy Coordinator featured on a panel during the lecture. She spoke on the urgency for gender-equal citizenship reforms and Family Frontiers' national advocacy campaign to achieve this.



*Patricia Low, Family Frontiers' Research & Policy Coordinator and impacted Malaysian mother speaking on the panel*

### **'#PindaPerkara14: What will it take for Malaysian Mothers To Have Equal Citizenship Rights?' Panel in Collaboration with the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), 29 April 2024**

As part of our efforts to diversify and strengthen our network of allies—particularly among youth—Family Frontiers partnered with the Law Faculty at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) to co-host a panel discussion titled “#PindaPerkara14: What Will It Take for Malaysian Mothers to Have Equal Citizenship Rights?” The event aimed to raise awareness of gender-discriminatory citizenship laws among future legal professionals and youth leaders in a space that had previously remained largely untapped.

The panel featured a range of perspectives with the President of Family Frontiers sharing her lived experience as an affected mother, while Danial, an adult child of a Malaysian mother, spoke candidly about the personal impact of being denied citizenship. A law lecturer from IIUM provided legal insights into the constitutional implications of the issue, and YB Howard Lee, Member of Parliament for Ipoh Timor, contributed a video message urging reform and greater government accountability.

Moderated by an IIUM student, the session sparked vibrant exchanges, with participants posing thought provoking questions while expressing a strong desire to contribute to the cause. One student who is also a child of a binational couple, took the floor to challenge the long-standing myth that only Malaysian fathers can confer citizenship to their children. They urged fellow Malaysians to break this misconception and start conversations with friends and family about the inequality in our laws. The student later filmed and shared an advocacy [video](#) as part of Family Frontiers' ongoing campaign, helping extend the conversation beyond campus. This reflected the growing awareness and commitment among young Malaysians to support and amplify the call for gender-equal citizenship rights.



*Attendees at the “#PindaPerkara14: What will it take for Malaysian Mothers To Have Equal Citizenship Rights?” Panel*

### **'Tackling Statelessness: The Dilemma of Citizenship in Malaysia,' Panel at the KYUEM Summit 2024 Organised by Kolej Yayasan UEM, 23 June 2024**

One of our former interns who co-led the coordination of the 2024 KYUEM Summit had reached out to invite Family Frontiers to speak at the event. Drawing from what she had learned during her time with us, she worked on pitching and shaping a session focused on citizenship rights and statelessness in Malaysia. It's always deeply affirming to see young people take ownership of the issue and create space for these conversations in new arenas. Representing Family Frontiers, our Research & Policy Coordinator, Patricia, spoke alongside Dr. Ong Kian Ming, Dr. Tamara Jean, and Dr. Rodzianna Mohammad Razali. She unpacked the legal and systemic hurdles Malaysian mothers face in conferring citizenship to their overseas-born children, and how these challenges ripple through families and society.



*Panel discussion titled "Tackling Statelessness: The Dilemma of Citizenship in Malaysia," at Kolej Yayasan UEM*

## **COLLABORATIONS WITH CIVIL SOCIETY AND YOUTH-LED INITIATIVES**

### **Panel on Malaysian Youth Activism Summit 2024, 4 August 2024**

As part of our continued efforts to engage youth and support student-led initiatives, Family Frontiers was invited to speak at a youth-focused event in August. Our Lead Coordinator, Bina Ramanand, shared her journey as a foreign spouse navigating Malaysia's unforgiving immigration system. Speaking to over 60 youths, Bina recounted the everyday struggles faced by binational families—moments like being denied hospital admission for her child, revealing how disheartening these systemic issues are.



Her story struck a chord with the audience, many of whom were hearing these realities for the first time. What began as a sharing session evolved into something more. Several young women approached Bina after the session, expressing a desire to stay engaged and explore ways to support Family Frontiers' work.



*Family Frontiers Lead Coordinator, Bina Ramanand, speaking on the panel*

### **Comms Youth Action Plan Gathering: #PindaPerkara14UntukIbu, 8 October 2024**

In anticipation of the amendment to grant the overseas-born children of Malaysian mothers citizenship automatically, Family Frontiers organised the "Comms Youth Action Plan Gathering: #PindaPerkara14UntukIbu" to create a fast tracked, short-term communications and multimedia plan. This gathering was not just to mobilise support, but also to seek fresh perspectives, ideas and strategies that hadn't yet been explored in our advocacy. The gathering delivered on that and more. It sparked new ways of thinking about how to communicate the urgency of the mothers' amendment and led to the formation of a collaborative network among participants.

One of the key outcomes was the co-creation of a focused content plan, developed collectively during the session but led by Family Frontiers. This plan laid out strategic calls to action and a calendar of social media content designed to build pressure in the lead-up to the tabling of the constitutional amendment. The collaboration continues, with participating youth and organisations contributing ideas, energy, and content to sustain public momentum.

Building on the success of this initiative, we plan to expand this work in the first quarter of 2025 by hosting a targeted communications workshop, with a particular focus on engaging CSO communications personnel from East Malaysia. The goal is to deepen national participation, strengthen advocacy narratives, and ensure that voices from across the country are represented and amplified in the movement for gender-equal citizenship.



*CSO and youth representatives at the gathering*

### **Booth Exhibition and Panel Discussion on “Unraveling Statelessness in Malaysia”, 7 November 2024**

The Family Frontiers team was invited to set up a booth at the Faculty of Law, University of Malaya for an event organised by UM LexAct in collaboration with SUHAKAM called “Unravelling Statelessness in Malaysia”. Through this event, we managed to reach more students and raise awareness on unequal citizenship laws in Malaysia.



*Family Frontiers at their booth in University of Malaysia*



Additionally, Family Frontiers President Adlyn Adam Teoh was invited to feature on a panel discussion on statelessness and citizenship laws. She shared her experiences as a Malaysian mother who was unable to confer citizenship to her overseas-born child and her advocacy. She also spoke about the #PindaPerkara14UntukIbu campaign and the work Family Frontiers has done.



*Family Frontiers President Adlyn Adam Teoh speaking on the panel.*

### **Nationwide “Abang Adik” Film Screenings**

Family Frontiers assisted Sarawak-based Lawyer Kamek for Change and Sabah-based ANAK to bring film screenings to Kuching, Miri, and Kota Kinabalu. Additionally, we supported Aliran in organising a screening and panel discussion in Penang. These screenings marked a significant step in expanding public awareness on citizenship and statelessness issues. For many attendees, it was their first time engaging with the issue, sparking meaningful conversations and fostering a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by individuals who face barriers to legal identity. Through these screenings, we reached diverse audiences across Malaysia, broadening the movement for equal citizenship rights and statelessness.



*Abang Adik Film Screenings in Petaling Jaya and Penang*



### **#PindaPerkara14UntukIbu," "#TolakPindaanZalim," and "How Can Overseas Malaysians Help?, 18 May 2024**

The webinar organised by Family Frontiers with the support of Global Bersih, and Saya Juga Anak Bangsa Malaysia (Translates to 'I too, am a child of Malaysia'), Australia was attended by over 50 overseas Malaysian mothers and other members of the Malaysian diaspora via zoom. The panel featured Gaithiri Siva, an impacted mother; Mr. Rangunath, a Commissioner at the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM), Chee Yoke Ling, Family Frontiers' Vice President, and Suriani Kempe, Family Frontiers' Executive Committee Member, who moderated the session. The discussion successfully connected Family Frontiers with a new group of Malaysian mothers, many of whom sought clarity on the legislative process behind their citizenship applications and the current status of the amendment.

Following this webinar, Family Frontiers managed to establish a new network of overseas mothers via WhatsApp who are now actively engaging in the advocacy towards equal citizenship rights.



*#PindaPerkara14UntukIbu," "#TolakPindaanZalim," and "How Can Overseas Malaysians Help? Panel Discussion*

### Film Screening and Panel Discussion: "Saya Juga Anak Malaysia", 8 June 2024

In collaboration with EMPOWER and local independent bookstore, GerakBudaya, Family Frontiers organized the 'Saya Juga Anak Malaysia' film screening and panel discussion. The event brought together attendees from diverse age groups, which brought upon an interesting perspective on citizenship rights. The panel featured distinguished speakers, including Maria Chin Abdullah, former Member of Parliament; Michelle Ng, Selangor State Legislative Assembly Member for Subang Jaya; Patricia, Family Frontiers' Research & Policy Coordinator; and Niba, an impacted adult child. Their insights sparked a dynamic discussion, with participants actively engaging in the Q&A session. The event successfully deepened public awareness and inspired action, as several attendees later approached the Family Frontiers team to explore ways to further support the campaign.



*Saya Juga Anak Malaysia Film Screening and Panel discussion*

## *Digital Advocacy: #PindaPerkara14UntukIbu Campaign*

Family Frontiers intensified our digital advocacy efforts to exert greater pressure on the Government for immediate action to achieve the reform. Central to these efforts were social media content produced on our platforms such as infographics, videos and high production value call-to-action videos. Additionally, there were also several social media campaigns and influencer collaborations to intensify public pressure upon Members of Parliament to vote in favour of #PindaPerkara14UntukIbu.

### **Social Media Advocacy**

Throughout the year, there were several posts that garnered significant traction across different platforms, spotlighting the plight of Malaysian mothers and their children which deeply resonated with the public.

- **#PindaPerkara14 Call to Action Video 1** - Impacted mothers and activists call upon the public to urge their Members of Parliament to only vote in favour of the mothers' amendment and to halt the remaining regressive amendments.
- **#PindaPerkara14 Call to Action Video 2** - Impacted mothers and children call upon the public to urge their Members of Parliament to only vote in favour of the mothers' amendment
- **#PindaPerkara14Untuk Call to Action Poster** - A guide for the public on how to engage with their Members of Parliament to vote only in favour of the mothers' amendment and to halt the remaining regressive amendments.
- **Poster to urge Malaysian mothers to return and give birth** - A PSA poster to followers to increase awareness that the mothers' amendment is not yet passed
- **Tiana's video** - A Malaysian woman shares her story as someone who may be impacted by the discriminatory law if it is not passed
- **Sylvanian families** - A fun social media trend to keep the issue relevant
- **#PindaPerkara14UntukIbu Call To Action Video 3** - Participants of the #PindaPerkara14UntukIbu Comms Youth Action Plan Workshop produced an outcome video urging public to urge their Members of Parliament to only vote in favour of the mothers' amendment.



- Our media outreach extended to global audiences through radio and digital platforms. We featured in a [Mandarin-language BFM Radio interview](#), shedding light on the challenges of binational families, and collaborated with 'Athena Effects' podcast to reach youth audiences on citizenship rights.

Social media collaborations with key opinion leaders and content creators helped amplify the reach of the call to action campaigns and campaign awareness.

- [Family Frontiers X Tragikomedi](#)
- [Joanna Joseph](#)
- [Roshinee Mookaiah](#)
- [Esther, an impacted mother](#)

Various social media campaigns were also executed to diversify the campaign and reach out to different target audiences.

- [#MerdekaUntukIbuMalaysia](#) - A Merdeka campaign to raise awareness on #PindaPerkara14UntukIbu through the read outs of poetry written by impacted mother Patricia Low.
- [#MahasiswaUntukIbuMalaysia](#) - A campaign to raise awareness on #PindaPerkara14UntukIbu amongst students, particularly those studying law.

Family Frontiers reached an estimated 29.2K people through their Facebook and 209K people on Instagram. Family Frontiers also garnered 132 356 views on TikTok and on X (Twitter), the most engaged post reaching 89K people.

### 'Family Frontiers Follow Up' Newsletter Marketing

Family Frontiers also started newsletter updates for stakeholders to subscribe to and receive updates on the organisation's initiatives through Brevo.





### *Urgent Call To Action Updates*

Family Frontiers' newsletter has **351** subscribers with a **10.91%** open rate within seven newsletter campaigns in 2024.

## *Shaping the Narrative Through Media Engagements*

Family Frontiers continued utilising mainstream and alternative media to increase public awareness and action towards gender-discriminatory citizenship laws and apply public pressure upon the government to proceed with the mothers' amendment and halt the regressive amendments. By engaging with the media, FF ensures that citizenship and statelessness issues remain in the public spotlight, with 161 media mentions in 2024 alone.

### **Malaysian mother, Esther Teo on BFM, 18 January 2024**

After fighting an uphill battle against the system for years, alongside other mothers and Family Frontiers, Esther Teo's eight-year-old daughter finally obtained her citizenship in late December 2023. She shares her experiences advocating for her daughter's citizenship on BFM.



Source: BFM

### **Family Frontiers Lead Coordinator on the Podcast "In The Middle", 22 March 2024**

Bina Raman and, the lead coordinator and co-founder of the Family Frontiers, shared stories of Family Frontiers' "perjuangan" (struggles) in securing a long-awaited amendment that would progress women's citizenship rights in Malaysia.



Source: In The Middle on Youtube

### Malaysian mother, Esther Teo and Anieza Ismail on FreeMalaysiaToday, 31 August 2024

Esther Teo and Anieza Ismail, two impacted Malaysian mothers, were interviewed by FreeMalaysiaToday to discuss the difficulties they faced throughout their journey towards obtaining citizenship for their children.



Source: FreeMalaysiaToday

### Coverage on the "Ibu Merdeka buat Ibu Pertiwi" event, 21 September 2024

In this video, the overseas-born children of Malaysian mothers are seen joyfully celebrating their first Malaysia Day after recently being granted citizenship.



Source: The Star

Family Frontiers also organised a press conference on 19 June 2024, "[#PindaPerkara14UntukIbu: Malaysian Mothers Left Disheartened as Government Abandons Promised Retroactivity for Amendment](#)". It discussed several issues surrounding Malaysia's gender-discriminatory citizenship laws that deny Malaysian women the right to confer citizenship to their overseas-born children by operation of law. As a result, over ten media articles were published on the issue.



*Family Frontiers and Malaysian Mothers after the Press Conference*



## *Empowering Binational Families Through Targeted Service Delivery*

In 2024, Family Frontiers continued providing support to Malaysian binational families through enquiries, case management and referrals via the Foreign Spouses Support Group (FSSG) Facebook public service platform. This encompassed addressing areas concerning visas, passes, permits, Permanent Residence, access to healthcare and education, marriage registration, domestic violence, employment rights and endorsement to work. **FSSG made a total of 115 public announcements and responded to 2561 direct queries this year.**

As part of our continuous efforts to strengthen advocacy and deepen community engagement, the Foreign Spouses Support Group (FSSG) launched a dedicated WhatsApp group, **Women in Binational Families**. This platform serves as a safe and supportive space for Malaysian women married to foreign spouses, as well as foreign women married to Malaysian men.

The group fosters a close-knit community where members can openly share their experiences, seek guidance, and support one another through the challenges they face. Through this initiative, FSSG aims to empower women by equipping them with knowledge, resources, and a strong network of peers who understand their struggles firsthand.

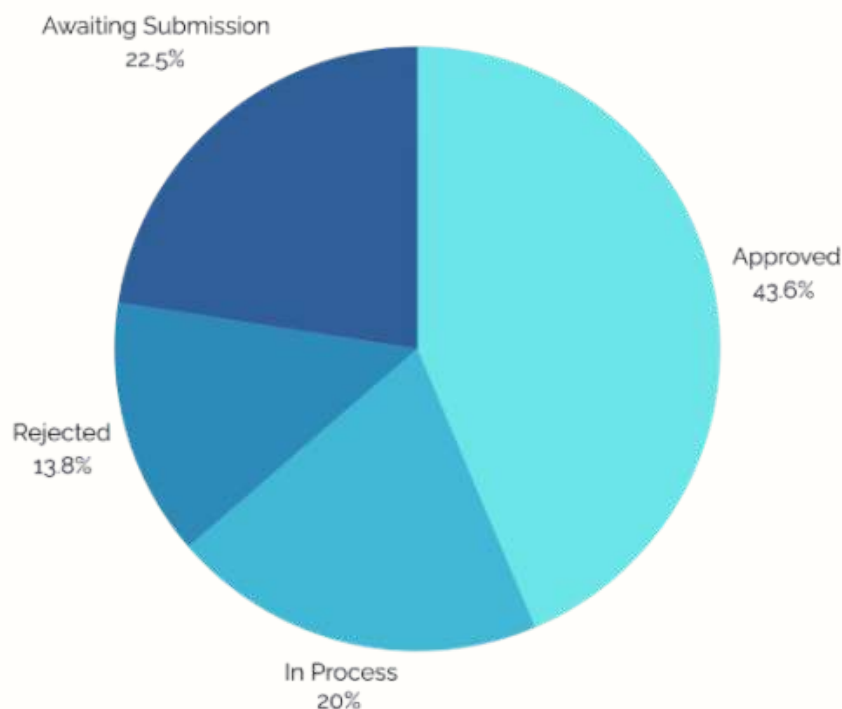
### **Article 15(2) Citizenship Applications Progress**

In addition, Family Frontiers observed a significant increase in approvals granted to affected mothers applying for their children's citizenship under Article 15(2). This progress reflects the continuous advocacy efforts spearheaded by Family Frontiers and the Mother's Network.

Family Frontiers has also been collaborating closely with the Citizenship Division at MOHA, consistently providing updated lists of critical cases for review and prioritization. As a result, below are the details of the current mothers' status,

The status of citizenship applications under Article 15(2) is as follows:

- **Approved:** 120 children [Children whose citizenship applications were approved in 2024, including plaintiffs of the KL High Court Civil Suit.]
- **In Process:** 55 children [Children whose mothers have submitted Borang B applications and are awaiting decisions. These cases have also been raised and are currently under review by the Citizenship Division at MOHA.]
- **Rejected:** 38 children [Children whose citizenship applications were rejected and have not yet been re-applied for. Family Frontiers will continue to monitor these cases and provide necessary support.]
- **Awaiting Submission:** 62 Mothers [These are mothers who are still in the process of applying. They may be preparing documentation or facing challenges such as documentation restrictions, financial constraints, or logistical issues. Family Frontiers will continue to monitor and support them throughout the process.]



The progress achieved in 2024 demonstrates the impact of sustained advocacy and collaboration. Family Frontiers remains committed to supporting affected mothers in securing their children's citizenship and will continue to work closely with MOHA to ensure equitable and efficient outcomes.

## *Regional & Global Collaboration to Safeguard the Rights of Binational Families*

Family Frontiers continued taking up spaces on regional and global platforms. Global outreach efforts have been pivotal in increasing the campaign's visibility on the global front. These international engagements have played a crucial role in raising the visibility of Malaysia's gender-discriminatory citizenship laws, allowing the campaign to resonate with broader human rights movements and build cross-border solidarity. By forging meaningful alliances with global actors, Family Frontiers has been able to elevate the urgency of reform at home, while simultaneously positioning the issue within a wider international context of gender justice and equal nationality rights. Our strategic engagement with United Nations (UN) bodies has continued to be a cornerstone of this advocacy. Through the use of UN treaty body mechanisms, complaint procedures, and shadow reporting processes, we have persistently brought attention to the lived realities of affected families, reminding the Government that the world is watching, and that reform is not only a domestic imperative, but a global expectation.

### **World Conference on Statelessness 2024, 26 February - 29 February 2024**

Family Frontiers kicked off the year with one of the most significant events in the statelessness movement. As strategic partners, we played a key role in the coordination of the 2024 World Conference on Statelessness, held from 26–29 February 2024 at Taylor's University, Kuala Lumpur. The conference, organised by the Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion (ISI), Nationality for All (NFA), and Development of Human Resources for Rural Areas (DHRRA Malaysia), brought together over 400 participants from around the world, including activists, academics, community organisers, UN and government representatives, donors, and individuals with lived experience of statelessness.

This conference has been in the works since early 2023, given its large scale and complexity. Its success was also a significant milestone for Family Frontiers, both in terms of visibility and movement-building. Framed around the themes of Solidarity, Knowledge, and Change, the programme was developed through a consultative process with the wider field, ensuring its relevance to current advocacy needs and community realities.



## BRINGING GRASSROOTS VOICES TO THE 2024 WORLD CONFERENCE ON STATELESSNESS



*Participants of the World Conference on Statelessness 2024, brought together by Family Frontiers*

One of the most impactful moments of the year was being able to sponsor 20 grassroots activists and impacted individuals from across Malaysia, many of whom had been working in isolation on the issue of statelessness, to attend the 2024 World Conference on Statelessness held in Kuala Lumpur. With the support of Porticus, this marked the first time many of them had the opportunity to participate in such an international space, exchange knowledge with global actors, and see how their own lived experiences and work fit into a broader movement for change.

The experience proved to be eye-opening. Throughout the year, participants reflected on how the exposure had shaped their everyday work—strengthening their advocacy approaches, building confidence, and creating a sense of solidarity that had long been missing. For individuals like Mashithah and Agnes Padan, who had been tirelessly working on the ground in their respective communities, this experience brought renewed purpose and a clearer vision of what collective action could look like.

The participants didn't just listen, they also took action. Together, they filmed an advocacy [video](#) at the conference, with a firm call to the Malaysian Government to halt the regressive provisions in the proposed Citizenship Amendment Bill and to proceed only with the long-awaited amendment granting Malaysian mothers equal citizenship rights. In the following month, the Government announced that two of the most concerning provisions—those that would have made it easier to strip citizenship from foundlings and abandoned children—had been removed from the bill.

## CONTRIBUTIONS THROUGH KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Family Frontiers played a prominent role throughout the programme. Former President moderated a panel discussion on Mobilising to End Gender Discriminatory Nationality Laws, engaging over 50 global stakeholders. Our Lead Coordinator facilitated a skills lab on National Advocacy on the Right to Nationality and Statelessness and participated in a session on Resourcing the Statelessness Field, sharing Malaysia-specific challenges and lessons. Two Executive Committee members, both impacted individuals, led a legal workshop on Litigating for Gender Equal Nationality Laws, highlighting the role of lived experience in driving impactful advocacy.



Two members of our Executive Committee—women with direct experience of Malaysia's discriminatory nationality laws—led a legal workshop on Litigating for Gender Equal Nationality Laws, offering insights that were rooted not just in legal knowledge but in personal conviction. Their session, attended by 23 participants, demonstrated the power of grassroots-led advocacy and the importance of centering impacted voices.

Additionally, we conducted an arts workshop on 'The Power in Personal Stories: The Art of Audio-Visual Advocacy,' engaging 20 participants in storytelling techniques inspired by the #SayaJUGAanakMalaysia campaign.

## ART AS A CATALYST FOR GENDER-EQUAL NATIONALITY RIGHTS

To bring the realities faced by Malaysian mothers to life, we also introduced an interactive, life-sized Snakes and Ladders: Malaysian Citizenship Edition board game as part of the conference 'Think of Others' Immersive Arts and culture Programme. The game which drew over 300 participants brought attendees through the frustrating, often dehumanising bureaucratic maze that so many families endure.



*Family Frontiers' life-sized 'Snakes and Ladders: Malaysian Citizenship Edition' board game where players had an opportunity to experience a board game simulation emulating the cumbersome and bureaucratic hurdles from the perspective of a Malaysian mother.*

Alongside this, we had also set up a multidisciplinary exhibition that further brought the struggles of impacted Malaysian mothers to life. Through portraits and personal stories of Malaysian mothers and their children, the exhibition provided a powerful narrative of resilience and the ongoing challenges faced by binational families. Designed to be immersive, the exhibit encouraged visitors to explore its visual elements, engage with the artwork, and interact with various activities—such as opening boxes, sifting through items, and reflecting on the lived experiences of those featured. This exhibition served as both an educational tool and a call to action, fostering a deeper understanding of the urgent need for reform in Malaysia's nationality laws.



*Family Frontiers' 'Drawn to Home' installation delves into the diasporic journey of Malaysian women, exploring their ties to homeland through significant everyday objects, in the face of stark discrimination by their homeland.*

For us at Family Frontiers, this wasn't just another conference, it was a watershed moment in making the local struggle for gender-equal citizenship in Malaysia part of a larger global movement. It reminded us, and others, that justice is not just a legal matter but a lived one.



### Youth Summit on Achieving Gender-Equal Nationality Laws, 10 - 11 July 2024

In July, our Programme Coordinator and Social Media and Communications Coordinator attended the Youth Summit on Achieving Gender-Equal Nationality Laws in Istanbul. They facilitated a sharing session on our ongoing multimedia campaign for Malaysian mothers who are unable to confer citizenship to their children born abroad. The session focused on sharing best practices, lessons learned, and key advocacy strategies from our campaign. The intimate nature of the Summit also served as a space for youth activities working on nationality rights to exchange insights, discuss challenges, and explore ways to strengthen our own advocacy efforts for gender-equal nationality laws in our respective countries.



*Participants of the Youth Summit on Achieving Gender-Equal Nationality Laws*

### 4th Asia Pacific Feminist Forum, 12 - 14 September 2024

Family Frontiers, in collaboration with the Korea Center for United Nations Human Rights Policy (KOCUN) and the TransAsia Sisters Association of Taiwan (TASAT), organised a workshop titled "Building Connections: The Dynamics of Marriage Migration in the Asia Pacific" at the 4th Asia Pacific Feminist Forum (APFF) in Chiang Mai.

This was our first involvement at the APFF and the goal for this was to highlight the issue of marriage migration at the forum. The workshop highlighted our ongoing advocacy for issues affecting Malaysian binational families. It also showcased preliminary findings from the Multi-Country Research Project on Women Marriage Migrants, in which Family Frontiers is a participant. Facilitated by Family Frontiers' Programme Coordinator and Research & Policy Coordinator, the session was attended by 36 feminists from across the region.



*Participants who attended the "The Dynamics of Marriage Migration in the Asia Pacific" in collaboration with KOCUN and TASAT at Asia Pacific Feminist Forum*

Following our collaboration with the Korea Centre for United Nations Human Rights Policy (KOCUN), Family Frontiers was invited to share our advocacy efforts during the 4th UPR Review during a Workshop on the United Nations Universal Periodic Review (UN UPR) Mechanism organised by KOCUN.



*Family Frontiers' Programme Coordinator speaking during the Workshop on the United Nations Universal Periodic Review (UN UPR) Mechanism*

### **Asia-Pacific Regional Review of the 30th Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**



*Subin Mulmi (Nationality for All) and Alicia Dixon (Family Frontiers) at the Beijing +30 Asia Pacific Review*

From 16 to 21 November 2024, Alicia Dixon, the Communications and Social Media Coordinator of Family Frontiers took part in the Beijing +30 Asia Pacific Review process, participating in the Young Feminist Forum, CSO Forum and Ministerial Conference. Throughout the whole process, we noticed the lack of awareness surrounding the impacts of gender-discriminatory nationality laws upon women and girls, thus realised the need to improve this. To create conversation surrounding the intersectionality between gender and statelessness in the Asia Pacific region, Family Frontiers and our regional partner Nationality for All conducted a workshop titled "Gender and Stateless", which was a fruitful experience. As a result of these engagements, the issue of gender-discriminatory nationality laws was included in Southeast Asia's CSO Forum statement at the Ministerial Conference.

### **Advocacy Capacity Building Program - Enhancing Engagement of Women's Rights Organizations in Migration Governance, 7-9 October & 24-27 November 2024**

Our Research and Policy Coordinator, representing Family Frontiers, has been part of a training project organised by UN Women and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) that will run from 2024 to 2025. This project aims to empower women's rights organisations in Southeast Asia to effectively advocate for gender-responsive migration policies. The multi-module training includes capacity building on technical knowledge on migration policies and principles of gender equality, strategic advocacy skills, and engaging with regional platforms and intergovernmental mechanisms. As part of the program, our Research and Policy Coordinator was featured in a testimonial video [here](#).



*Participants of the workshop and our Research and Policy Coordinator giving an intervention*

### **Regional Workshop on Developing Migrant and Refugee Indicators in the GCM , 25-28 November 2024**

Family Frontiers Assistant Programme Coordinator recently attended the Regional Workshop on Developing Migrant and Refugee Indicators in the Global Compact for Migration (GCM), which brought together stakeholders from across Southeast Asia to identify relevant indicators for monitoring the progress of GCM implementation in the region. The workshop included sessions on aligning national frameworks with GCM objectives, sharing country experiences, and exploring the intersection of refugee and migration governance. As an outcome, participants co-developed a set of recommended indicators that can be adapted by civil society and governments to strengthen data collection and accountability mechanisms. Family Frontiers took part in this workshop in preparation for our participation in the 2nd Regional Review of the GCM, scheduled for February 2025. Our involvement reflects our commitment to ensuring the experiences of impacted communities are reflected in the regional review process.



### Global Multistakeholder Summit on Advancing Gender Equality on Nationality Laws, 10 - 11 December 2024

Adlyn Adam Teoh, President of Family Frontiers, addressed the Global Multistakeholder Summit on Advancing Gender Equality in Nationality Laws in Geneva, shedding light on Malaysia's strides toward eliminating gender-discriminatory citizenship laws. She highlighted the historic constitutional amendment passed by both houses of Parliament last year, which grants Malaysian women the long-overdue right to confer citizenship to their overseas-born children—a long-awaited reform bringing relief to Malaysian women. The Malaysian delegation, led by YB Isnaraissah Munirah Majilis, was also present at the summit.



*Adlyn Adam Teoh speaking on the panel & with the Malaysian delegation*

Other involvements:

- **Global Forum on Migration Asia Pacific:** At the Global Forum on Migration Asia Pacific, we raised awareness of the link between marriage migration and statelessness, engaging over 60 civil society organizations in discussions on legal protections for binational families. Our involvement in the UN Women workshop on labor migration governance in Bangkok further amplified our advocacy, ensuring gender-equal nationality rights remain a priority in migration policies.
- **AWID Forum 2024**
- **APWLD Feminist Legal Training Programme (FLTP):** At the FLTP, Family Frontiers' Communications and Social Media Coordinator joined 11 other participants across Asia and the Pacific to learn about the Feminist Legal Theory and Practices as a framework for analysis and strategising for advocacy. The workshop enhanced the capability of women migrants and migrants rights defenders and feminist activists to effectively challenge discriminatory laws and practices against women in migration.

## **Regional and Global Advocacy for Gender-equal Citizenship and Marriage Migration**

Over the past year, we've begun stepping into new regional and global spaces to push the conversation on nationality rights and marriage migration further. Bina, our Executive Director now sits on the Steering Committee of the Statelessness and Dignified Citizenship Coalition (SDCC), and is part of the UNHCR's Global Alliance's Taskforce and [Advisory Committee](#). She also serves on the Malaysia Board of the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD), where we continue to be active members. These roles reflect a growing recognition of the work we've been doing on the ground, and they're helping us ensure that the lived experiences of communities in Malaysia are part of shaping broader strategies and solutions for gender-equal citizenship.

# OUR HEARTFELT GRATITUDE





## *Global and Regional Partners & Donors*

We extend our sincere appreciation to our coalition partners, donors, and all individuals who contributed through our fundraising platform.

Your support has been instrumental in sustaining our work to challenge gender-discriminatory citizenship laws and advocate for the rights of Malaysian women and their overseas born children. With your solidarity & support, we have continued to mobilise a growing movement for gender-equal citizenship, and amplify the voices of Malaysian mothers and binational families.

Together, we are pushing for systemic change—and your commitment makes this work possible.

- Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD)
- Global Campaign for Equal Nationality Rights (GCENR)
- Global Statelessness Fund (GSF)
- Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion (ISI)
- Nationality for All (NFA)
- Porticus
- Women's Fund Asia (WFA)

We would also like to thank all individuals who contributed through our Simply Giving fundraising platform.

## *Collaborators, allies & supporters*

1. All Women's Action Society (AWAM)
2. Akar Umbi Society
3. ANAK (Sabah)
4. Angkatan Wanita Amanah Nasional (AWAN)
5. Architects of Diversity (AOD)
6. ASASI KPUM
7. Asia Research Centre
8. Bar Council Human Rights Committee
9. Cahaya Society (Sabah)
10. Child Rights Coalition Malaysia (CRCM)
11. CSO-SDG Alliance
12. EMPOWER Malaysia
13. Development of Human Resources for Rural Areas, Malaysia (DHRRA-Malaysia)
14. GerakBudaya
15. Global Bersih
16. Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)
17. IIUM Law Society
18. International Organisation for Migration (IOM) Malaysia
19. Iskul Sama di Laut Omadal (Sabah)
20. Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG)
21. Justice for Sisters (JFS)
22. Kolej Yayasan UEM
23. Knowledge and Rights with Young People Through Safe Spaces (KRYSS Network)
24. Majlis Hal Ehwal Wanita dan Keluarga UMNO Malaysia (HAWA)
25. Malaysian Citizenship Rights Alliance (MCRA)
26. Malaysian Law Students' Network (MLSN)
27. Musawah
28. Persatuan Pembela Wanita
29. Project Liber8
30. PACOS Trust
31. Sabah Women's Action Resource Group (SAWO)
32. Sarawak Women for Women Society (SW/WS)
33. Saya Anak Bangsa Malaysia (SABM), Australia
34. Social Democracy Malaysia (SOCDEM)
35. Sisters in Islam (SIS)
36. Stateless Malaysia Citizenship Movement (SMCM)
37. Suara Rakyat Malaysia (SUARAM)

- 38. Tenaganita
- 39. United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)
- 40. University Malaya Lex Act
- 41. Women's Aid Organisation (WAO)
- 42. Women's Wing of the Malaysian Chinese Association (Wanita MCA)
- 43. Lawyer Kamek For Change (Sarawak)
- 44. Purple Lily Association Kuching (Sarawak)
- 45. The Fourth
- 46. Women's Centre for Change (WCC), Pulau Pinang
- 47. Untitled Kompeni

## ***Our Legal Team***

We extend our deepest appreciation to our legal team at Messrs. Nijar & Advocates and Messrs. Joshua Aaron Keet for your expertise, and countless hours of work—especially in taking on this case pro bono—have been instrumental in advancing the pursuit for gender-equal citizenship in Malaysia. The milestones we've reached would not have been possible without your support and belief in this cause. We are profoundly grateful for your role in standing with Malaysian women and children in their pursuit of equal rights. Your contribution goes beyond legal advocacy—it is an impact on generations of Malaysian mothers.

## ***Our Community of Malaysian mothers***

We wish to express our heartfelt appreciation to the community of Malaysian binational families and Malaysian mothers who continue to advocate for their children's right to citizenship. Your resilience and bravery in speaking out, sharing your narratives, and championing your rights. We understand the challenges you've faced on this journey, and your courage serves as a constant inspiration to us. Your determination and resolve to push for your rights have been the cornerstone of our campaign and team, and we are privileged to stand in solidarity with you every step of the way.

We acknowledge that sharing personal stories is never easy, yet your voices have been instrumental in raising awareness about this issue. Your experiences have shed light on the profound impacts of gender-unequal citizenship laws on Malaysian women and their children.

We remain committed to amplifying your voices and ensuring that your lived realities are seen, heard, and addressed. This campaign will continue—until equal citizenship rights are a reality for all. Thank you for your courage, your perseverance, and your unwavering belief in our work at Family Frontiers.