



FAMILY FRONTIERS

Persatuan Kebajikan Sokongan Keluarga Selangor & KL (PPM-011-10-24072020)

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Press Statement

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Family Frontiers Urges Clarity on “Social Visit Pass” Task Force to Protect the Welfare of Non-citizen Spouses and their Malaysian Families

Family Frontiers notes with concern the recent announcement regarding the formation of a task force to curb the misuse of Social Visit Passes. While we support the government's efforts to ensure immigration laws are respected, we strongly urge the government to provide immediate clarity on the specific categories of passes being targeted.

The term "Social Visit Pass" is a broad administrative category in Malaysia that covers several different groups. A lack of distinction between these Social Visit Pass categories in public discourse is dangerous. By using the blanket term "Social Visit Pass abusers", the government risks fuelling public prejudice and misinformation. For thousands of Malaysian binational families, the Long Term Social Visit Pass (LTSVP) is a vital lifeline that keeps their families together. It is their primary basis for being legally in Malaysia with their families.

In 2025, the government issued approximately 141,381 social visit passes for non-citizen spouses of Malaysians. Although the Immigration department states that foreign spouses of Malaysians are permitted to work, the LTSVP for non-citizen spouses comes with a statement "any form of employment is strictly prohibited." This leads to severe difficulty in securing jobs as employers are reluctant to employ non-citizen spouses with this statement on their visas. Furthermore, the endorsement to work is highly restrictive in nature. This places a significant burden on the Malaysian family unit and the household's ability to support the best interest of the child. Although concerns have been brought to the government's attention at the highest level multiple times over many years, this situation remains unchanged.

The current restrictions on employment overlook the latent talent that non-citizen spouses can offer to the Malaysian economy. Despite 75% of non-citizen spouses holding tertiary degrees, only 11.4% are legally employed.¹ Many non-citizen spouses have endured hardships and to settle here in Malaysia for the long term to support their families, with their Malaysian spouse and children being the main beneficiaries. Their social and economic contributions to the Malaysian society and the country should not be underutilised and ignored.

Family Frontiers is concerned that a narrative of 'Social Visit Pass abuse' will spook employers, making them even more hesitant to hire legal non-citizen spouses. Spouses on LTSVPs need to acquire an endorsement to work under the Immigration Act. Any ambiguity

¹ From 2020 to 2024

from the government could inadvertently create new, informal barriers to their right to earn a living and support their Malaysian families.

As the inter-agency task force begins its work, Family Frontiers stresses that the welfare of non-citizen spouses and their Malaysian families must be explicitly protected.

We call on the government to:

- Ensure the meaningful inclusion of civil society organisations working on migration, family unity, and the rights of non-citizen spouses on the taskforce.
- Clearly state that enforcement actions are directed at short-term visa violators and not legal residents on spouse-based LTSVPs.
- Launch a simultaneous effort to educate employers on the legality of hiring spouse-based LTSVP holders with work endorsements, noting that this is a short term measure
- Remove the statement of prohibition from employment on the LTSVP issued to non-citizen spouses of Malaysians, as a just and fair long term measure.

We remain committed to working with the government to ensure a fair immigration system that distinguishes between those bypassing the law and those who are integral members of the Malaysian family fabric.

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