

**Press Release:**

**Open Letter to the Prime Minister and MPs : 10 October 2024**



*Image: YAB Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim holding a placard in support of a constitutional amendment to allow Malaysian mothers the right to confer citizenship to their overseas-born children by operation of law at the Wanita Pakatan Harapan's GE15 Manifesto Launch in 2022.*

### **600 Days Too Long: Urging PMX and MPs to Deliver on Citizenship for Our Children**

**As Malaysia nears the historic amendment for full equality, we urge all our MPs to honour their commitment and ensure equal citizenship rights for Malaysian women.**

YAB Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim, The Malaysian Cabinet, and Members of Parliament,

Over 600 days ago, in [February 2023](#), the government promised us Malaysian women the right to confer citizenship to our overseas-born children by operation of law, through a constitutional amendment. After multiple delays and months of anticipation, we respectfully ask for this promise to be fulfilled during the upcoming Dewan Rakyat sitting as recently reiterated by the Minister of Home Affairs, [Dato' Seri Saifuddin Nasution](#).

We Malaysian women, welcome your government's efforts to address long-standing issues relating to the citizenship of children born abroad to Malaysian mothers – through amendments in the Constitution (Amendment) Bill 2024 that include “mother” in Sections (1)(b) and (1)(c) of Part II of the Second Schedule of the Federal Constitution. We are also extremely grateful that the Minister of Home Affairs has been proactively expediting our

citizenship approvals under Article 15(2), granting many of us with relief and reassurance that our now Malaysian children would not be separated from us.

Every day a Malaysian mother waits for news about her child's citizenship status increases her vulnerability to domestic violence, keeps her forcibly separated from her family, fills her with anxiety about her children's future, and imposes financial burdens from raising a non-Malaysian child due to the ongoing costs of visa and pass renewals, along with long wait times and repeated citizenship applications.

This further reinforces why it is important that the constitutional amendment is passed immediately without any more delay. Each day that passes without this constitutional change undermines the rights of Malaysian women and their children. Delaying this further risks denying more overseas born children of Malaysian women citizenship and subjecting them to the unequal impacts of current citizenship laws. No other Malaysian woman after this should have to make the choice between risking her life and her unborn child over a guarantee to citizenship. They should not be forced to leave their existing families behind overseas to give birth in Malaysia while being all alone.

While we are overjoyed that your government intends to put this to an end, we still feel heavyhearted that us existing women will not be included in this amendment due to its non-retroactive nature. We have campaigned tirelessly for years, but some of our children whose citizenship applications under Article 15(2) are still pending or have been rejected without explanation, may not become Malaysian in their lifetimes. Those overseas who cannot resubmit in Putrajaya and those facing application obstacles will also be affected. More importantly, it excludes adult overseas-born children of Malaysian mothers now over 21 and ineligible to apply, including some whose mothers have passed away, perpetuating historical discrimination.

The discretionary nature of Article 15(2) and the rejections without reasons make it impossible for all overseas-born children to obtain approvals. Additionally, mothers dealing with health issues, custody disputes, single parenthood, and financial strain remain uncertain about their futures. If the amendment is not implemented soon, retroactively and retrospectively, more Malaysian women will face these challenges. As such, it is vital that the mothers' amendment is passed retroactively.

Malaysian women all across the world implore you to ensure that the mothers' amendment is read in the upcoming Parliament session next week, as previously promised. We also call on all 222 MPs to prioritise the rights of their female constituents and their overseas-born children by voting in favour of this crucial amendment. Additionally, we ask that the remaining regressive amendments be decoupled and halted.

No Malaysian or their children should be left behind.

***Quotes by Malaysian women:***

1. As a Malaysian mother, I can no longer accept the unjust treatment of my son, who has lived in Malaysia for nearly his entire life, yet is still regarded as a foreigner.

Every year, we are forced to go through the painful process of renewing his visa, as if he doesn't belong here, despite him speaking fluent Malay, singing 'Negeraku,' and fully embracing the identity of a Malaysian. This is his home. Why must I, as a mother, endure the heartbreak of seeing my child treated differently?

Why is my son not allowed to be Malaysian, just like those children born overseas to Malaysian fathers and foreign mothers? What makes my child any less deserving?

- Sarah (a pseudonym), an impacted Malaysian mother.

2. 5 years ago I had to give up everything in Germany and risk my life to return home to give birth. After a very long struggle, now my both daughters are Malaysian, I hope that in future my daughters will not have to choose between her own safety and her unborn child's Malaysian citizenship. (like I did previously) It's just too unfair for the mothers.

- Esther, an impacted Malaysian mother.

3. As a future mother, I envision a Malaysia where women enjoy full equality with men, free from the fear that our children might not be recognized as citizens. Women should not have to endure lengthy struggles just to legally claim what should be automatically recognized. We should be able to marry without concerns about our partner's origin country and live vibrant lives in a community that upholds equality for all. This is my vision for a progressive Malaysia.

- Aaliyah, a young Malaysian woman.

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#### **Malaysian Women who have Endorsed this Letter:**

1. Sarah Czarina Mashanis
2. Nathasvari Karoonamoorthi
3. Sumitha Samiappan
4. Melinda Anne Sharlini
5. Alicia Dixon
6. Nur Aliyya Khairutheen
7. Vanesa Chung Martinez
8. Lalitha Samiappan
9. Raveena Nagotra
10. Azalea Wong
11. Areesha Nair
12. Pallavi A/P Kiruba Ganesan
13. Emmy Williams
14. Ummi Faustina binti Wafi Lim
15. Amy Rachel Lai Oi Li
16. Hon Jia Xuan
17. Fiona Eudora Gomez

18. Adaiah Wong
19. Michelle Ong
20. Lynna Wong
21. Tiana Danielle Xavier
22. Fararina Bte Kamil
23. Esther Teo
24. Mashithah binti Abdul Halim
25. Leanne Majambun
26. Jolene Siah
27. Jade Choong
28. Lim Pearleen
29. Norhaliza Binti Mat Zain
30. Mellisa See
31. Natasha Kim
32. Rebecca Augustin
33. Yvonne Augustin
34. Jorja Chooi
35. SookYeen Lee
36. Lilian Tai
37. Mariasela Padmanathan
38. Khairun Nisaq Taslim
39. Leong Mei Quin
40. Emmy Williams
41. Adlyn Binti Adam Teoh
42. Patricia Low Pek Wan
43. Christine Al Jammal Binti Larry Nimuh
44. Lim Oon Syn
45. Elaine Lam
46. Josil Murray
47. Headry Tiuh
48. Chin Nyiuk Syarm
49. Loh Bun Khiun
50. Anita
51. Maryam Jameela
52. Nik Elin Nik Yusoff
53. Ashley Wong
54. Li Li
55. Nur Ain binti Abdullah
56. Suat Bee
57. Ng Mei Mei
58. Esther Thong
59. Agnes Ngim
60. Jane Lim
61. Zuanne Cheng
62. Shamila Unnikrishnan
63. Kamala Ernest
64. Sumalini Lalita
65. Suriyanti Binti Harun

66. Christina Leong Chi Wei
67. Ng An Li
68. Lee Suet May
69. Lim Sok Ee
70. Gaithiri Siva
71. Karen Hau
72. Leila Louise Fitton
73. Ang Boon Yen
74. Aniza
75. Sharm Rajoo
76. Lee Cheng Yie
77. Pamela Wong S L
78. Sarijah Abd Hamid
79. Chee Huey Ning
80. Buelah Subramaniam
81. Ummal Remiza Binti Khaja Mohideen
82. Lydia Chai
83. Chia Ai Lin
84. Marlene Lim
85. Prema Krishnamuthi
86. Tissy Tiong Ing Swan
87. Ho Wen Chia
88. Lee Lei Nooi
89. Lee Oh Muai
90. Liew Lee Peng
91. Amelia Tai
92. Hor Li Ming
93. Julieson Anak Jabal
94. Eva McGovern
95. Amirah Anis Khair
96. Kavita Kaur
97. Joanna Kovilpillai
98. Krystle Low
99. Tasneem Muhammad
100. Raajeswari Nadarajan
101. Defny Mohd Yusri
102. Yow Ing Shyen
103. Gooi Soo Hui
104. Rebecca Khor Keng Li
105. Claire Wong
106. Amutha Vijnthran
107. Peck Gee Chua
108. Pamela Yeh
109. Suhaina Mohammed
110. Judith Teo
111. Jean Liew
112. Hiew Keh Ai
113. Monica See

114. Sofia Yusof
115. Lee su hoon
116. Karen Lim
117. Saunders Au
118. Ooi Sue Yin
119. Sharini Yogi
120. Yogamalar Rajadurai
121. Boey Sook Yen
122. Yap Yee Leng
123. Wong Sau Lai
124. Jenny Lim
125. Monica Lim
126. Chen Mi Ghent
127. Khoo Hwang Gee
128. Emmy Clarice Naili
129. Ng Koon Lee
130. Dr. Melati Nungsari
131. Naomi Chey
132. Christine Teh
133. Misha Samantha Pairin
134. Shahlina
135. Maxima Teh
136. Cassandra Chong
137. Monaliza Lim
138. Maizatul Mohamed
139. Karen Yeaw
140. Daphne Lee
141. Priya Kulasagaran
142. Cheryl Lau Hui Lin
143. Yong Fui Chin
144. Celine Lim
145. Linda Goh
146. Mah Li Nee
147. Cleopatra Sandud
148. Ng Siow May
149. Chin Yun Wen
150. Aaliyah Danial