

The Lived Experiences of Malaysian Women and their Children Born Outside Malaysia due to Malaysia's Unequal Citizenship Laws



Aini, a Malaysian mother of two children with disabilities

Aini is a Malaysian mother of two special needs children, one non-Malaysian and another who is Malaysian. Due to her daughter's lack of Malaysian citizenship, Aini is unable to access affordable healthcare for her overseas-born child as her daughter is ineligible for an OKU card. As a result, her daughter's therapy sessions are much more costly compared to the fees for her Malaysian child.

Mashithah, a Malaysian mother of four Malaysian children & one stateless child

Mashithah is a Malaysian mother of five children; four of whom are Malaysians as they were born in Malaysia while her fourth child who was born overseas is stateless as he was unable to inherit his father's citizenship. Mashithah gave birth overseas while visiting her in-laws overseas. Before leaving Malaysia, she checked with JPN and was informed that her child's Malaysian citizenship can still be obtained even if born abroad. However, this was not the case when she contacted the Malaysian embassy following her son's birth. Her son remains stateless to this date.



Atirah Syamimi, a Malaysian mother of two Malaysian children & one refugee child

Mimi's second daughter, Maryam, holds Palestinian refugee status which does not give her rights and protection. Mimi risked her pregnancy to return to Malaysia in February 2023 to give birth to her third so the child would not inherit refugee status. At present, Maryam has received a special travel document from Egypt to return with her mother, but still faces an uncertain and unstable future in Malaysia.



Danial, a 24-year old rapper and racer, son to Malaysian mother Jamaliah Ismail

Danial has been living in Malaysia on a Student Pass, but is no longer be able to do so as he has since completed his university life. This means a wave of uncertainties awaits Danial, including the possibility of being separated from his family in Malaysia. As a talented racer and musician, Danial had to give up many opportunities, despite wanting to proudly represent Malaysia, the country he calls home.

Li Li, a single Malaysian mother living in Italy who awaits her return to Malaysia

Lili awaits her return to Malaysia with her young daughter so she can get family support while raising her child. Li Li gave birth overseas as she was advised against travelling due to her high-risk pregnancy. She had to fend for herself after her divorce, and must rely on her ex-husband for her child's travel documents, which opens them up to mental and emotional abuse.



Rozita, a lecturer and a Malaysian mother to a non-citizen child

Rozita is a lecturer working at a public university in Malaysia. Currently, she is facing difficulties enrolling her child into national school as her daughter's application is still pending. She was meant to enter Standard 1 this year but due to her non-citizen status, she will only be allowed to join her Malaysian classmates much later as she has yet to receive an approval. As an educator and lecturer, he was disappointed because his son did not have full access to the government-aided education system.

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