



**Persatuan Kebajikan Sokongan Keluarga  
Selangor & KL** (PPM-011-10-24072020)  
Association of Family Support & Welfare Selangor & KL (Family Frontiers)

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## **PRESS STATEMENT**

### **PR Status of Malaysian Women Abroad Must Not Impact Citizenship Rights of Their Children**

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Family Frontiers welcomes the resounding vote in Parliament on October 17th in support of the "Mothers' Amendment," a landmark decision that upholds the right of Malaysian mothers to pass citizenship to their children on an equal footing with fathers.

However we are equally disappointed that the other amendments were not considered to be voted separately, which could have allowed critical refinement, ensuring fair treatment under the law.

Family Frontiers sincerely appreciates recent steps taken by the Minister of Home Affairs Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution bin Ismail, to approve citizenship applications for children of Malaysian mothers born abroad and residing in Malaysia. This milestone brings immense relief to many families, representing the first approvals under Article 15(2) in over a decade.

However, alongside these advancements, we are increasingly concerned by a pattern of rejections that suggest Malaysian women's Permanent Residency (PR) status abroad is being used to determine the citizenship eligibility of their children.

Out of the recent rejections recorded within our network, we note that nearly 80% of the cases involve Malaysian mothers holding PR in another country. This development appears to signify a worrisome interpretation of PR as indicative of "foreign allegiance," when in reality, PR does not equate to citizenship and is simply a means of maintaining stable residency abroad. For instance, in jurisdictions like Hong Kong, one can achieve PR after a certain period of residency without it leading to citizenship. PR status provides stability but should not be mistaken for a renouncement of one's own nationality or a factor impeding children's rightful citizenship.

*Does our own country expect us to face such uncertainty just because we live and work abroad? Holding PR in another country doesn't lessen our loyalty to Malaysia. Many have asked why I don't simply seek citizenship where I live now. But I am Malaysian—it's where I grew up, it's part of who I am, and that will never change. It breaks my heart that my children's citizenship applications were rejected, despite our commitment to Malaysia, shown by taking a long drive to the Malaysian Embassy in Sweden twice from Denmark when our two children were just babies, strictly following the regulations before our children turned one year old? - Chia Ai Lin*

### **Permanent Residence Is Not Citizenship**

Permanent Residence is a residency status, not a declaration of allegiance. PR holders maintain their Malaysian citizenship and are fully entitled to uphold their rights under the Malaysian Constitution. Do Malaysian men, holding PR status abroad experience these same restrictions on their children's citizenship? Is their allegiance to Malaysia questioned?

*Is the citizenship of children born to Malaysian men discretionary because of his permanent residence status elsewhere? Mine isn't half the vote or half the tax, so there's no basis for giving me half the right! "Equality" as a concept cannot be this difficult to understand!*  
**Shamila Unnikrishnan** - a Malaysian mother with two children working in Kenya.

### **The Right to Family Unity Must be Protected**

Malaysian mothers should not face additional barriers to secure their children's citizenship based on PR status abroad, which is simply a legal tool allowing families stability and access to essential resources. PR does not confer political rights or imply a severance of ties with Malaysia. Rather, it empowers women to support their families, an aspect crucial to any Malaysian mother seeking the best for her children, no matter her country of residence.

### **A Call for Review and Transparency in Citizenship Decisions**

Family Frontiers urges the Ministry of Home Affairs to review citizenship rejections involving PR-status mothers to ensure decisions are made in the spirit of the Malaysian Constitution. We also call for greater transparency on the reasons behind citizenship rejections, which currently remain unclear.

### **Moving Forward for Equitable Policy**

We urge policymakers to recognize that all Malaysian mothers—irrespective of their PR status—deserve the assurance that their children's rightful citizenship will be protected and to follow the rule of law.

### **For Office Use:**

Submitted by - Association of Family Support & Welfare Selangor & KL (Family Frontiers)

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