

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN THE ERA OF COVID-19
WALKING THE TALK OF EQUALITY
AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Firdaus Husni

Malaysian Centre for
Constitutionalism and Human Rights



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- Introduction
 - Racial Discrimination in Malaysia in the era of COVID-19



Introduction

Considering that all human beings are equal before the law and are entitled to equal protection of the law against any discrimination and against any incitement to discrimination,

Convinced that any doctrine of superiority based on racial differentiation is scientifically false, morally condemnable, socially unjust and dangerous, and that there is no justification for racial discrimination, in theory or in practice, anywhere,

Convinced that the existence of racial barriers is repugnant to the ideals of any human society,

Alarmed by manifestations of racial discrimination still in evidence in some areas of the world and by governmental policies based on racial superiority or hatred, such as policies of apartheid, segregation or separation.

- Preamble to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

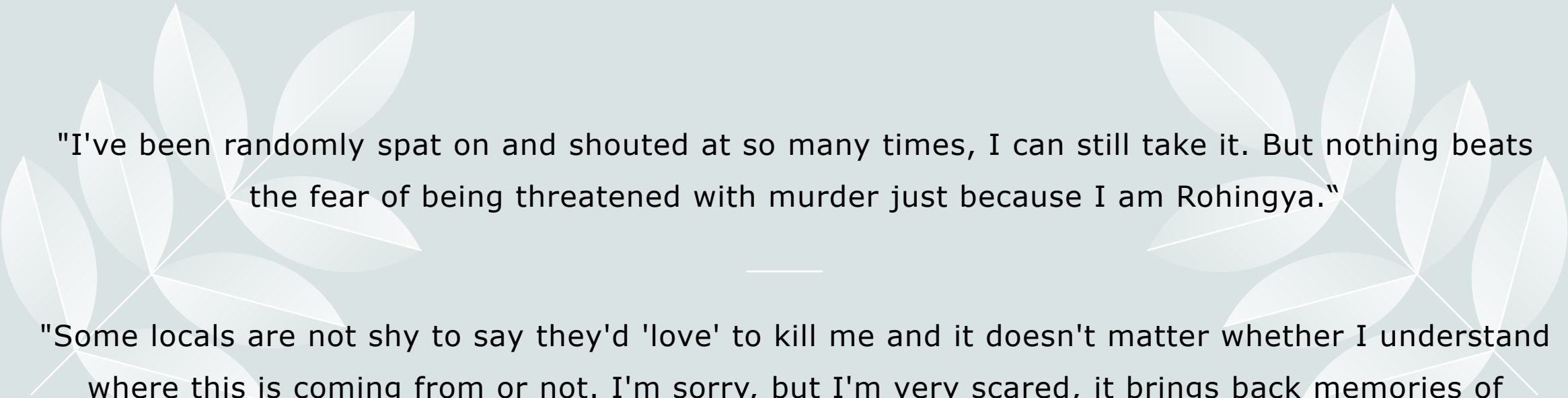
Racial Discrimination in Malaysia in the era of COVID-19

- Hate speech and racial violence
- Detention, expulsion and deportation of non-citizens
- Economic, social and cultural rights
- Efforts by civil society, Malaysian Bar, media and the government's response



Hate speech and racial violence

- Racially charged speech or posts on social media -
 - against Malaysians of other race/religion.
 - against the migrant community.
- Verbal threats including murder threats
- Ban from entering places of worship
- Calls for deportation
- Government sanctioned anti-Rohingya sentiments



"I've been randomly spat on and shouted at so many times, I can still take it. But nothing beats the fear of being threatened with murder just because I am Rohingya."

"Some locals are not shy to say they'd 'love' to kill me and it doesn't matter whether I understand where this is coming from or not. I'm sorry, but I'm very scared, it brings back memories of escaping from Rakhine."

- The Straits Times, April 30, 2020

Detention, Expulsion and Deportation of Non-citizens

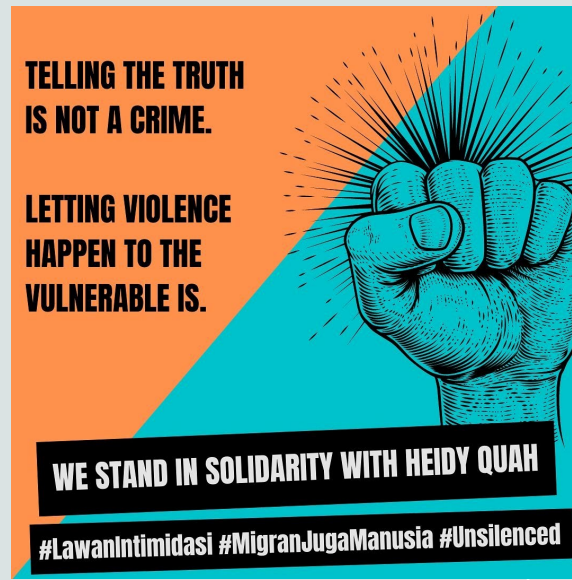
- U-turn in policy and law enforcement
- Crackdown during lockdown
- Media ban from covering crackdown
- Boats carrying refugees pushed back to sea
- Defiance of court order to stop deportation
- COVID-19 outbreak in detention centre – condition against COVID-19 preventative measures

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of Non-Citizens

- Loss of employment due to heightened stereotypes
- Exclusion from government aid programs and legal protection
- Right to health - Unable to access health sector due to fear of being reported.
- Rise in suicide cases - Malaysia has yet to decriminalise suicide

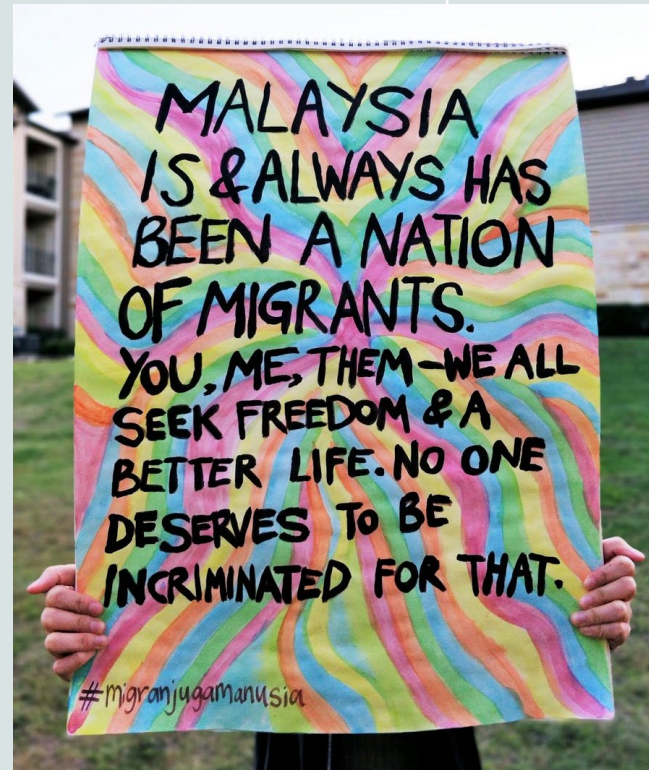
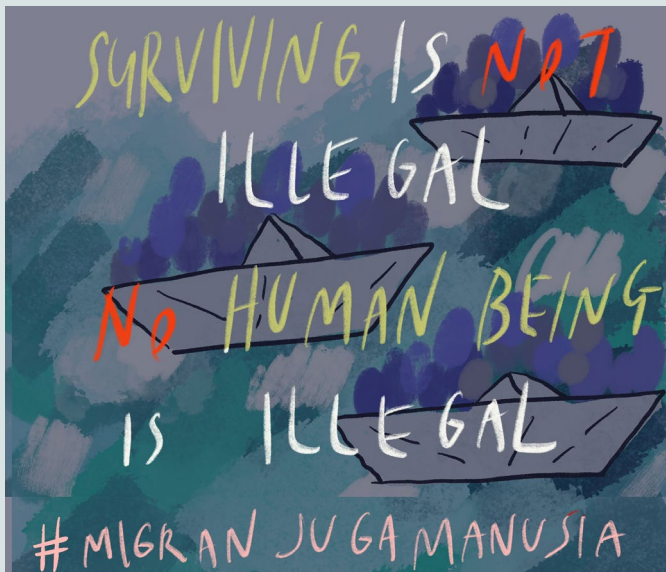
Efforts by civil society and other groups

- Online campaign #MigranJugaManusia (Migrants are humans too)
- Malaysian Bar - “show empathy and compassion and allow all migrants – without regard to their immigration status – to have access to testing, treatment and COVID-19 vaccination without the fear of arrest or detention.”
- Journalists and activists called for questioning by the police
- UN Rights Expert - “Stop crackdown on migrants, journalists and civil society”
- Malaysian medical groups - to consider public health, call for more humane approach



#MigranJuga Manusia

Migrants are humans too





Thank you



Firdaus Husni

Malaysia