

2ND QUARTERLY REPORT

April - June 2025

The Center to Combat Corruption & Cronyism





THE CENTER TO COMBAT
CORRUPTION AND CRONYISM

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Building on the momentum...

We are proud to share C4 Center's Second Quarterly Report for 2025, detailing our key activities and developments from April to June. Building on the momentum of the first quarter, we remain steadfast in advancing our mission to promote good governance, transparency, and accountability in Malaysia. This report outlines our continued advocacy, policy engagement, and collaborative efforts with civil society. We extend our sincere thanks to our partners and supporters for their unwavering trust and dedication to this shared cause.



28 June, CEO Pushpan Murugiah addressing the crowd at the Rakyat Benci Rasuah 2.0 Rally

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Appointment to Pro Tem Committee for the Drafting of the Freedom of Information Bill

Held in Putrajaya on the 15th of April 2025

This year, the Cabinet resolved to set up a Pro Tem Committee to consider the fundamental pillars of the Malaysian Freedom of Information (FOI) Bill, prepare a draft Bill, and identify challenges and solutions in the future implementation of the Bill. This Committee consists of representatives from various government ministries and agencies, civil society organisations (CSOs), and academics. C4 Center's Policy and Legal Research Officer Prishanth Linggaraj was appointed to this Committee as a CSO representative. The Committee's term shall last from 15 April to 31 September, after which the FOI Bill shall hopefully be tabled in Parliament by the end of the year.



The government's decision to convene a multis-takeholder forum to discuss the structure and implementation of an access to information framework is commendable. By creating the space for different stakeholders to speak about their areas of expertise, concerns and hopes, the Committee members have been able to work through thorny issues together through negotiation and honest conversation. C4 Center, along with the other CSOs on the Committee such as the Centre for Independent Journalism and Article 19, continues to push for a progressive and holistic model in line with international best practice.



Policy Refinement Workshop for Ombudsman Malaysia

Held in Kuala Lumpur on the 17th 18th of June 2025

Following C4 Center's release of our research report "Structuring the Malaysian Ombudsman Office" and our subsequent engagements with the Legal Affairs Division of the Prime Minister's Department (BHEUU), C4 Center's CEO Pushpan Murugiah and Policy and Legal Research Officer Prishanth Linggaraj were appointed to sit on the Steering and Working Committees on Holistic Consultation to Determine the Mechanism of Establishing the Malaysian Ombudsman respectively. These committees were set up by the government to conduct a holistic consultation work plan to consult with stakeholders and analyse the implications of the establishment of an Ombudsman office with regard to financial considerations, human resources, and legal matters.

The regional consultations were completed in early 2025 and the work of the Working and Steering Committees progressed to the next stage: a policy refinement session to consolidate the learnings gathered from the regional consultations. Pushpan

Murugiah attended this two-day workshop on behalf of C4 Center. The first day of the workshop consisted of a series of presentations focused on the practicalities of setting up an ombudsman institution and other ancillary matters, while the second day was dedicated to a series of group discussions on the various parameters of this reform proposal (structure, functions and powers, jurisdiction and scope).

Pushpan continued the organisation's efforts to influence the discourse surrounding the Malaysian Ombudsman, in order to push for a progressive model aligned with international best practice. C4 Center maintains that a functional Ombudsman office is sorely needed to ensure effective and equitable public service delivery for all. This office cannot simply be a weak complaints management body, and must be given strong investigative powers to successfully carry out its mandate. We hope to see these efforts come to fruition soon.



Leveraging the Proposed Ombudsman for Reform: A Special Session with Professor John McMillan - Town Hall and Advocacy Strategy Discussion

Held in Subang Jaya on the 16th of June 2025

As part of C4 Center's advocacy on the establishment of a Malaysian Ombudsman office, we have focused primarily on engagements with policymakers and lawmakers. However, in recognition of the need for more grassroots engagements on this topic, we organised a town hall and strategy discussion with civil society organisations (CSOs) to explore the relevance of an Ombudsman office to their respective operations. This session was held with the support of the Australian High Commission in Malaysia.

The event aimed to expound upon the Malaysian Ombudsman proposal and impress upon participants the potential usefulness of the body by examining the case of Australia with its Commonwealth Ombudsman. We had the honour of hosting former New South Wales and Commonwealth Ombudsman,

Professor John McMillan – who has a wealth of expertise and experience on Australian public service reform. His first-hand knowledge of the benefits that have come from the work of the Ombudsman system in Australia would provide participants with guidance on our journey here in Malaysia. Hence the first part of the session involved a presentation by Professor McMillan on the Australian Ombudsman experience, after which the floor was opened to questions from participants.

The second part of the session was a brainstorming exercise for the participants to consider the potential intervention points that an Ombudsman office could introduce for their respective thematic focus areas. Participants were invited from a diverse range of thematic focus areas e.g. environ-



ment, access to healthcare, arts and culture, women's rights, queer rights, democracy and governance. They were asked to consider the ways in which the problems they work on are caused by failures in service delivery or implementation of laws/policies (as opposed to flawed legislation, for example) – which will form the basis of how CSOs might seek to engage with the Ombudsman moving forward.

If an Ombudsman office (in whatever form) is to be established by the end of the year, CSOs and human rights defenders must start exploring what this means for our collective advocacy strategies and goals. Having an Ombudsman office that is empowered to perform independent and effective inquiries into instances of public service failure creates an important intervention

point for CSOs pushing for better governance at the policy level, as complaints can provide specific information on service failures and gaps which require attention. This could provide us with another tool for influencing change, and as such we must reach across our thematic silos to prepare accordingly.

By encouraging intersectional discourse on this reform proposal, it is hoped that a more holistic advocacy approach can be developed within the Malaysian CSO space. Additionally, by facilitating this critical examination of the potential uses of the Ombudsman for CSOs, we hope to encourage more CSOs to start incorporating mention of the Ombudsman in their public messaging. This will help shape the public narrative on the Ombudsman in favour of a progressive and effective model, which would add pressure upon lawmakers to ensure the final Bill tabled in Parliament is fit for purpose.





ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE



Malaysian BFFP Members Plastic Coordination and Waste Trade Campaign Meeting

Held in Subang on the 7th of April 2025

On 7 April 2025, C4 Center participated in a meeting organised by Break Free from Plastic (BFFP), one of our project funders, alongside other Malaysian BFFP members, including Greenpeace Malaysia, Zero Waste Sabah, Sahabat Alam Malaysia, and Hara Makers Initiative. The meeting aimed to strengthen collaboration, build momentum for the movement, and mobilise collective efforts to tackle plastic pollution at the national, regional, and international levels.

The session began with an overview of Malaysia's current plastic-related policies, presented by the Malaysian members. Key policies discussed included Malaysia's Roadmap Towards Zero Single-Use Plastics (2018–2030), Malaysia Plastics Sustainability Roadmap (2021–2030), National Marine Litter Policy and Action Plan (2021–2030), and Malaysia's Circular Economy Blueprint (2025–2035). These policies are currently in place, and Malaysian BFFP members are actively monitoring their implementation. They continue to engage with relevant stakeholders, assess policy effectiveness, and advocate for stronger enforcement and accountability to ensure these frameworks translate into tangible progress in reducing plastic pollution.

The meeting also included shared reflections from the fifth Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-5) meeting held last year. Members, who were also INC attendees,

discussed lessons learned and strategies for improving outcomes in the next INC meeting, with the goal of advocating for a stronger and more effective global plastics treaty.

Future collaborative projects were also discussed, particularly those related to plastic waste trade issues. Proposed initiatives include examining plastic waste trade litigation across ASEAN countries and amplifying voices and evidence of environmental harm. The group also affirmed its commitment to maintaining coordination across Asia-Pacific and global BFFP calls. Another significant agenda item was on the planning for a Parliamentary Workshop on The Impact of Plastic Pollution on Human Rights in ASEAN, which is scheduled to take place in Kuala Lumpur this July. This event will provide a platform for engaging policymakers and strengthening advocacy on the intersection of plastic pollution and human rights.

The meeting reaffirmed the pressing need for continued advocacy and action to address plastic pollution at all levels. The C4 Center remains committed to contributing meaningfully to this movement through research, advocacy, policy engagement, and public campaigning. Collaboration within this coalition presents a valuable opportunity that we aim to nurture and expand in the coming months.



Forest and Finance Symposium 2025

Held in Petaling Jaya on the 16th to 17th of April 2025

C4 Center participated in a two-day symposium on Forest and Finance, organised by Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM) from 16 to 17 April 2025, at Armada Hotel Petaling Jaya. The symposium aimed to strengthen the capacity of civil society organisations (CSOs) to engage with the financial sector in advocating for forest protection and the enforcement of social safeguards in Malaysia. It also sought to critically examine the role of Malaysian financial institutions and their sustainability policies, assess financial sector regulations, and explore global initiatives such as the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) in the context of forest and social protection. In addition, the event provided a platform to address issues related to transparency and accountability within the financial sector.

During the symposium, data from Forests & Finance (F&F) revealed that Malaysia is considered a forest-risk country, with the second-largest holdings of bonds and shares in companies operating in tropical forest-risk commodity sectors. While some Malaysian financial institutions have begun to announce responsible investment and financing policies, including Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG)

commitments and No Deforestation, No Peat, No Exploitation (NDPE) policies, case studies presented at the symposium showed that many of these institutions continue to finance operations that contribute to environmental degradation and violate the rights of Indigenous and local communities.

These discussions helped CSOs gain a clearer understanding of existing financial sector policies and their real-world impact, raising critical questions about whether such policies are genuinely effective or simply serve as greenwashing tools. The symposium also enabled participants to develop their capacity to respond to current issues, such as transboundary haze, and to identify the efforts needed to hold financial institutions more accountable for their role in forest destruction and social harm.

In conclusion, the symposium served as a vital space for building knowledge, strengthening advocacy strategies, and enhancing collaboration among stakeholders working to ensure that financial flows align with environmental and human rights protection. C4 Center remains committed to contributing to this ongoing work through advocacy, research, and policy engagement.



Meeting with NRES Ministry to present findings from study on the impacts of plastic and paper recycling industry to human health and the environment

Held in Putrajaya on the 18th of April 2025

The meeting organised by Greenpeace Malaysia on behalf of the UPM Environmental and Occupational Health Society (EOSH) who conducted the study was to present findings from the study which was conducted in the district of Banting where many paper and plastic recycling facilities are located. This location has also been one of the main sites of C4 Center's waste trade report where many illegal waste dumps were found. The findings in the study showed elevated readings of heavy metals and PM_{2.5} in the air samples collected near

the waste recycling facilities and residential areas near such facilities. The study included collection of river water, sediments and effluent discharge along Sungai Langat. The study concluded that the presence of waste recycling facilities significantly impacts air and water quality, especially facilities located close to residential zones. It called for stricter pollution control parameters in the current Environmental Quality Act and called for improved public health monitoring for communities and residents living near to such facilities.



KL Residents Action for Sustainable Development Association (KLRA+SD) Conference

Held in Kuala Lumpur on the 17th of May 2025

On 17 May 2025, C4 Center attended the Kuala Lumpur Residents Action for Sustainable Development Association (KLRA+SD) Conference 2025, themed “Moving Towards a Sustainable City,” held at Corus Hotel, Kuala Lumpur.

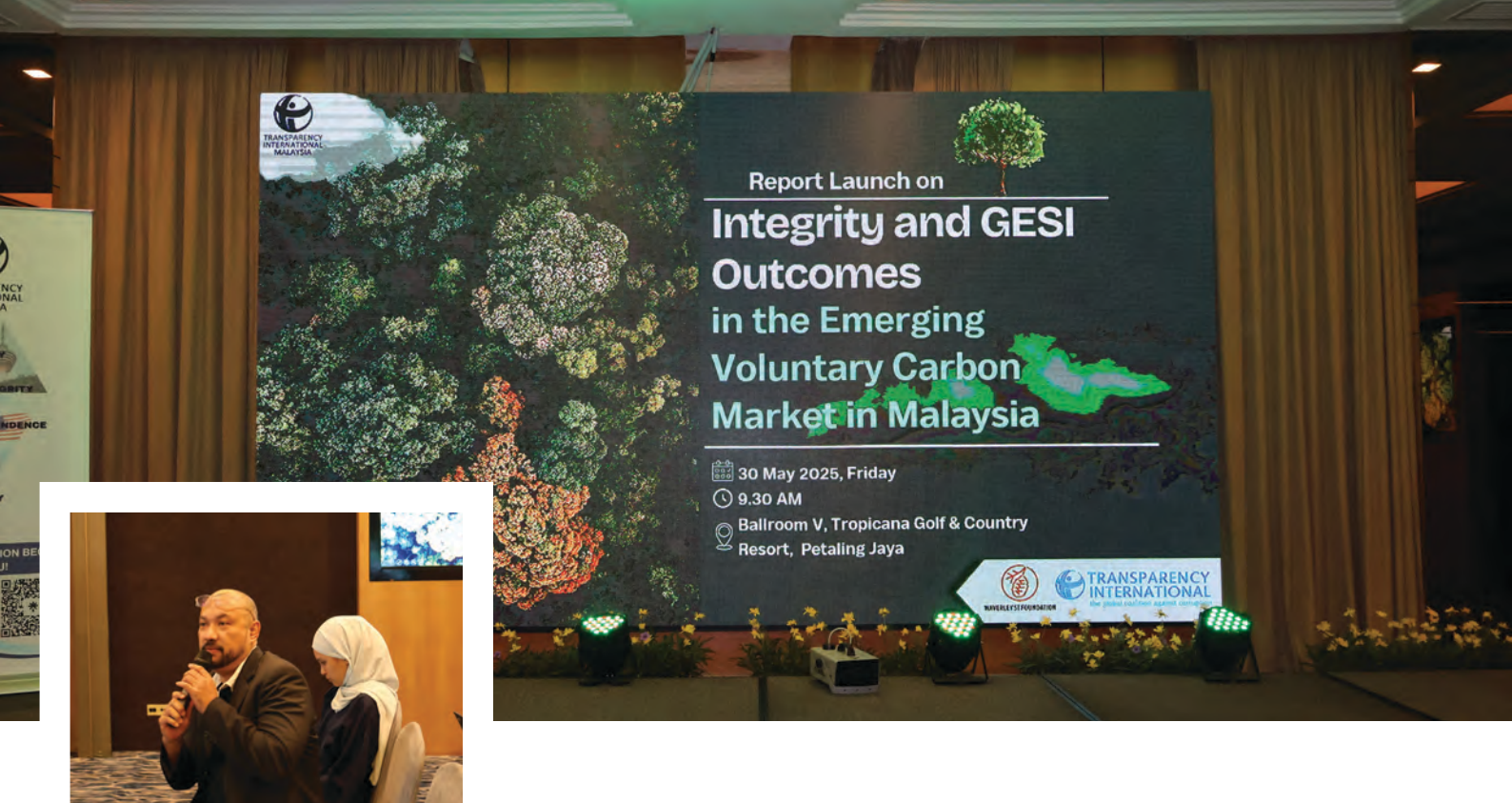
At the conference, KLRA+SD launched two new research papers addressing critical aspects of sustainable urban governance in Kuala Lumpur. The first paper, *Strategies on Transparency and Public Participation as a Pathway to Inclusive Development Control Processes in Kuala Lumpur*, emphasizes the need for greater openness and community involvement in urban planning. Developed through collaboration between civil society organisations and volunteers, the paper outlines practical measures to improve accountability and inclusiveness in decision-making, aligning urban development processes with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The second paper, *Improving Hill Land Management for Natural Heritage Conservation*, highlights the ecological and environmental significance of Kuala Lumpur’s hill lands. It examines current challenges in managing these areas, particularly in the context of urban expansion and climate risks. The paper proposes integrated policy solutions, including the enforcement and harmonization of existing legislation such as the Land Conservation Act, the

National Forestry Act, and the National Heritage Act, to safeguard hill lands for biodiversity, flood mitigation, and long-term ecological resilience.

In conjunction with the policy launches, KLRA+SD also announced the initiation of a public awareness and education campaign focused on redevelopment issues in Kuala Lumpur. The campaign aims to inform residents about their rights in the context of urban redevelopment, empowering communities to engage more effectively in planning processes. It also seeks to foster constructive collaboration among residents, NGOs, local authorities, and Members of Parliament to ensure that redevelopment contributes to a more inclusive and sustainable city.

The conference reinforced the need for structural reforms in both development planning and environmental management in Kuala Lumpur. Strengthening transparency and public participation is essential for just and equitable urban development. At the same time, protecting hill lands is vital for maintaining biodiversity, mitigating climate risks, and preserving the city’s natural heritage. The newly launched awareness campaign signals a proactive step toward building an informed, engaged, and collaborative citizenry that can hold stakeholders accountable and contribute to a more resilient and sustainable Kuala Lumpur.



Report Launch on Integrity & GESI Outcomes in the Emerging Voluntary Carbon Market in Malaysia

Held in Petaling Jaya on the 20th of May 2025

On 20 May, C4 Center participated in the launch of a report by Transparency International Malaysia (TI-M) titled “Integrity and GESI Outcomes in the Emerging Voluntary Carbon Market (VCM) in Malaysia.” As the VCM landscape is still in its early stages in Malaysia, the report aims to identify key governance and corruption-related risks that could undermine the credibility and effectiveness of carbon offsetting initiatives.

The report outlines several critical areas of concern: limited transparency and restricted public access to information; lack of inclusive, gender-sensitive community participation in project monitoring; inadequate reliance on scientific expertise in ensuring project integrity; and weak mechanisms for equitable engagement and benefit sharing with Indigenous Peoples and women. Other risks include undisclosed beneficial ownership, potential conflicts of interest between companies and policymakers, and project-level risks of greenwashing, double-counting, and fraudulent permanence claims.

By identifying these corruption threats and their implications for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), the project sets the foundation

for policy recommendations and institutional mechanisms to strengthen governance in VCM implementation. These recommendations aim to ensure Malaysia’s VCM activities contribute meaningfully to global greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goals while safeguarding environmental integrity and social equity.

The report also compiles best practices from prior civil society evaluations of climate finance and explores how these can be adapted to the Malaysian VCM context. Two Malaysian case studies, Bukit Tagar Sanitary Landfill and Kuamut Rainforest Conservation Project are analysed to assess how current practices align with integrity and GESI principles, and how government policy supports or falls short in these areas.

This event served as a timely and important platform for civil society, policymakers, and private sector actors to begin addressing the governance gaps in Malaysia’s emerging carbon market. It underscores the urgent need for transparency, accountability, and inclusive participation to ensure that climate finance mechanisms do not replicate or reinforce existing inequalities and governance failures.





ASEAN Peoples Forum: Thematic Cluster 12 Roundtable Discussion: Effective Whistleblowing in Environmental Crimes and Corruption

Held in Kuala Lumpur on the 23rd to 24th of May 2024



As a member of the Southeast Asia Anti-Corruption Network (SEA-CAN), C4 Center hosted a roundtable discussion titled Effective Whistleblowing in Environmental Crimes and Corruption. This session was held under Thematic Cluster 12 during the ASEAN Peoples' Forum, which took place from 23 to 24 May at Wisma MCA, Jalan Ampang.

They highlighted shared environmental challenges in the region, particularly those driven by corruption, such as large-scale deforestation that supports the mining and logging industries, wildlife trafficking, pollution from industrial sources, and the illegal transport of waste. These issues are increasingly common and represent some of the most pressing crimes affecting Southeast Asia.

Participants emphasised how environmental crimes severely impact the economy and the livelihoods of communities. In this context, the roles of whistleblowers and investigative journalists are critical. They serve as front-

The roundtable was organised to explore the complex intersection between environmental crimes and corruption. Its objectives were to gather knowledge on the nature of these crimes and their links to corruption, compile case studies to illustrate the impact of these crimes on the climate and environment, and highlight personal whistleblowing experiences that often involve serious risks and consequences, and to initiate steps towards a framework that could lead to a future whistleblowers summit.

The discussion brought together distinguished panellists and participants from across ASEAN countries.





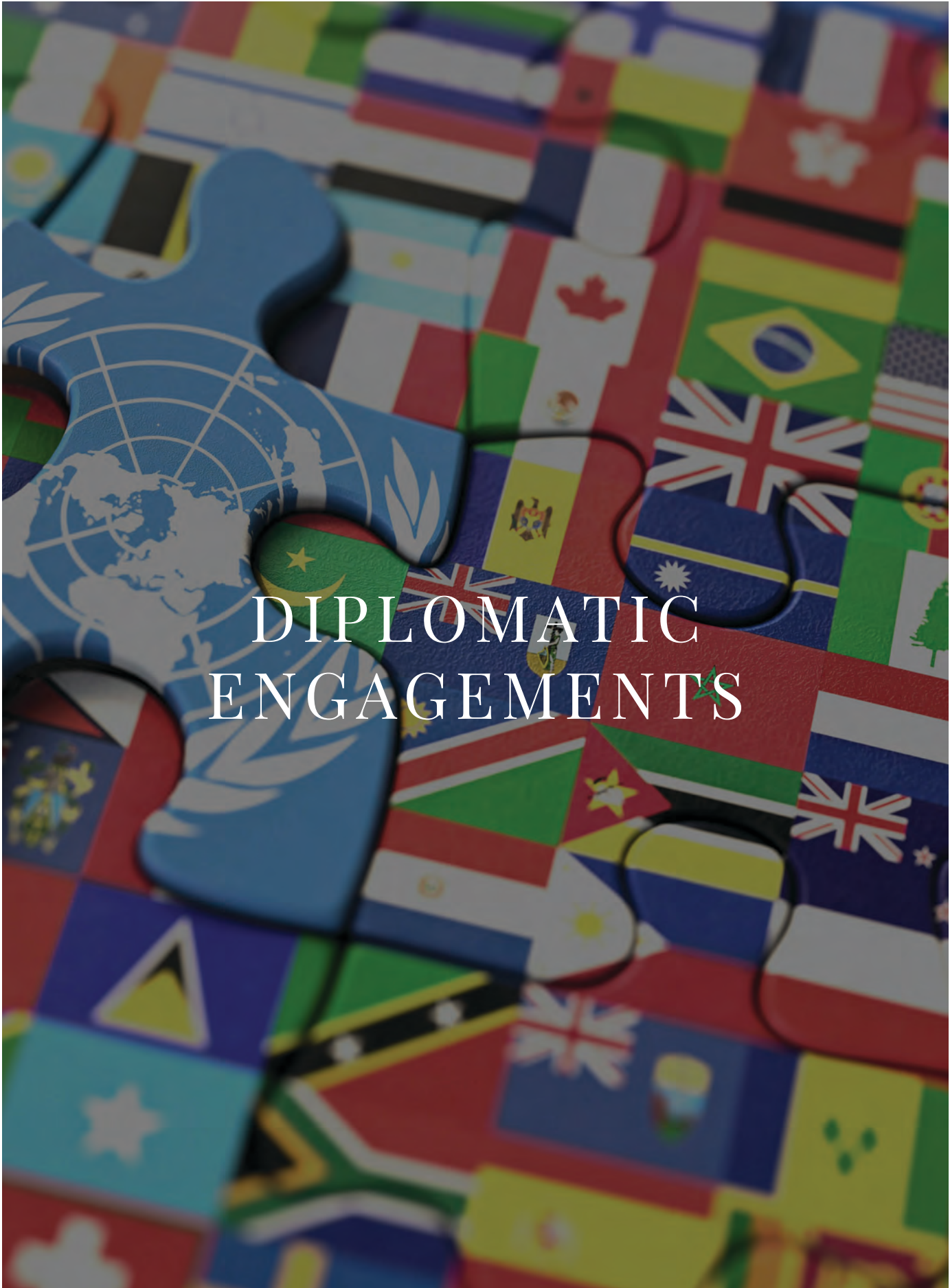
line defenders in uncovering wrongdoing, malpractice, fraud, and corrupt practices. Yet, their work often comes at a high personal cost, with many facing threats and violence.

Despite their importance, whistleblowers and journalists often lack sufficient legal protection. The roundtable acknowledged that these key actors frequently encounter reprisals from elites and state actors seeking to silence them. As a result, the discussion focused on the need to enhance legal awareness and examine existing whistleblower protection frameworks. Participants explored the legal landscape across the region and identified gaps where civil society organisations and communities could advocate for reform.

The roundtable also conducted a group discussion with key objectives to map ASEAN conventions and institutional bodies relevant to whistleblowing in environmental crimes. Participants shared insights and proposals for a potential framework centred around four main areas: supporting functions, advocacy strategies, legal frameworks, and the establishment of independent institutions to safeguard whistleblowers.

In conclusion, the discussion emphasised the importance of thinking globally while acting locally. Environmental activists must work across various interconnected areas of crime and build solidarity through indigenous, international, and regional networks. While international mechanisms for protection exist, local legislation remains weak and must be strengthened to ensure the safety of environmental defenders, organisations, and affected communities. Moving forward, future ASEAN summits should prioritise discussions on the operations of businesses, public-private partnerships, and the development of regional legislation to combat environmental corruption more effectively.





DIPLOMATIC ENGAGEMENTS



Follow Up Meeting with Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Regional Office for South-East Asia Representative

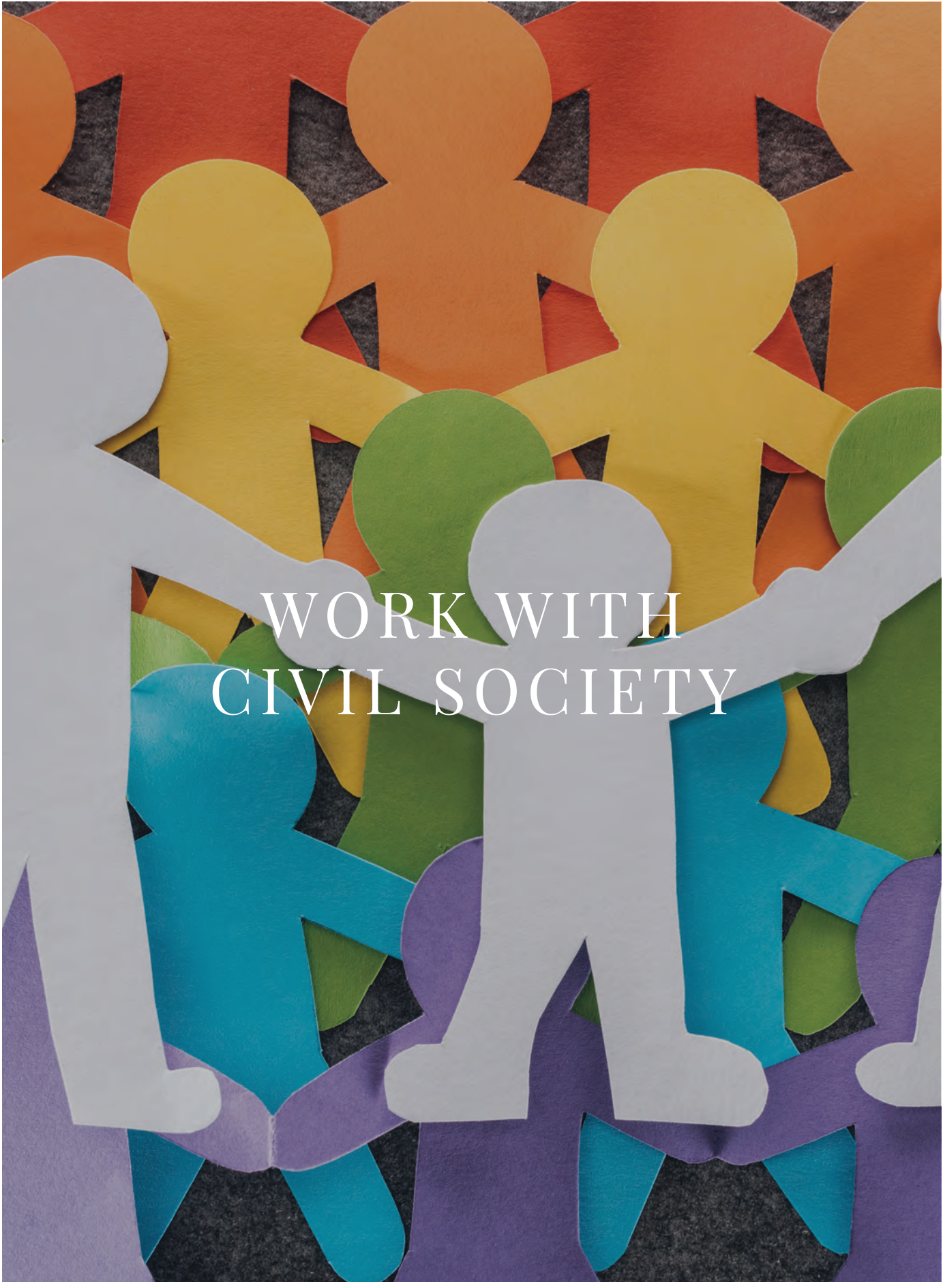
Held in Kuala Lumpur on the 26th of April 2025

C4 Center representatives previously had a meeting on 18 February 2025 with Arnaud Chaltin, Human Rights Officer with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Regional Office in Bangkok. We unfortunately were unable to meet with Shivani Verma (the Human Rights Officer overseeing the OHCHR's work in Malaysia) during that initial meeting. Instead, we managed to schedule a meeting with her on one of her trips to Kuala Lumpur.

As with our previous meeting with Arnaud, we got the chance to talk about the OHCHR's

priorities and goals in Malaysia and how C4 Center might be able to aid in these endeavours. On her end, Shivani gave us tips and ideas for advocacy strategies to help with C4 Center's ongoing work too.

The meeting went very well, and we are extremely appreciative to Shivani for taking time out of her busy schedule to accommodate us. We hope this marks the beginning of a long and productive relationship between C4 Center and the OHCHR.



WORK WITH
CIVIL SOCIETY



Setiawangsa Constituency Hari Raya Open House

Held in Kuala Lumpur on the 8th of April 2025

The Hari Raya Open House of Member of Parliament Setiawangsa and Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability (NRES), YB Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad coincided with the Break Free From Plastic (BFFP) Global team's annual planning and strategizing meeting. C4 Center saw this as a good opportunity to introduce regional CSOs to the minister in a casual setting and at the same time allow colleagues from Indonesia, Rahyang Nusantara (Deputy Director, Dietplastik Indonesia) and Philippines, Faye Ferrer (BFFP East Asia and Southeast Asia Network Organizer) to ex-

perience the Malaysia custom of holding open house during celebrations. C4 Center has plans to collaborate with Dietplastik Indonesia as they have recently completed a pre-lim study on reuse frameworks in Indonesia which could help inform Malaysia's circular economy policy drafting.



SUARAM Annual Human Rights Report Launch 2024

Held in Kuala Lumpur on the 10th of April 2025

SUARAM's Annual Human Rights Report is an important resource for data-driven advocacy in Malaysia, as it provides a concise yet extensive overview of the human rights situation in the nation for a given year - tracking areas of progress, regress, and avenues for improvement. In this regard, C4 Center is grateful for the opportunity to contribute a chapter on "Corruption and Governance" for a second year. Once again, this chapter explores the intersection between national anti-corruption efforts and good governance with the promotion, protection, and enjoyment of human rights (particularly the full realisation of economic, social, and cultural rights) for the year 2024.

This chapter – which was authored by Policy and Legal Research Officer Prishanth Linggaraj and peer reviewed by Research Officer Bryan Cheah – posits that the full enjoyment of human rights is wholly dependent upon the existence of effective, accountable, and transparent public

institutions and public service delivery systems. Therefore, the occurrence of human rights violations are symptoms of broader institutional failures that impair the government's ability or willingness to govern in a manner consistent with a rights-based approach.

C4 Center's diversified approach to understanding corruption allows us to identify a wider range of causal links that both entrench and aggravate the problem, resulting in a more holistic perspective overall. This also creates the opportunity for us to modify our advocacy strategies to enlarge our target audience and discover new possibilities for collaboration and cooperation. To this end, we shall continue striving to work beyond the confines of our 'silos'.



Expert Panel Discussion Assessing Malaysia's Civic Space under the EU-SEE Framework

Held in Kuala Lumpur on the 27th of May 2025

On 27 May, C4 Center CEO Pushpan Murugiah was invited as an expert panelist to contribute to an evaluation of the status of civic space in Malaysia under the EU System for an Enabling Environment (EU-SEE), by the national Network Member SUARAM.

EU-SEE is described as 'a comprehensive initiative designed to monitor and assess the enabling environment for civil society', that 'aims to systematically identify factors that support or hinder the effective operation and growth of civil society.' The primary assessment tool for this is an annual Country Focus Report that collates insights and numerical scores for various dimensions of an enabling environment for civil society. The invited experts sat together to come

to a consensus on how well the Malaysian legal and policy framework facilitates the establishment and operation of civil society bodies.

The purpose of this effort is to produce a quantitative and qualitative record to form the basis of future advocacy efforts to strengthen civic space in Malaysia. Some of the principles under the EU SEE methodology include whether the legal and regulatory framework enables civil society actors to form and operate, accessibility and sustainability of resources, and supportiveness of public discourse. This was an insightful opportunity for C4 Center to contribute to an intersectional discussion on the very nature of our operations as CSOs in Malaysia, and we are grateful for the chance to participate.



Report Meeting with Sarawak-based CSOs

Held in Petaling Jaya on the 26th of May 2025

On 26 May, C4 Center, in collaboration with the Bruno Manser Fund (BMF), co-hosted a closed-door meeting with Sarawak-based civil society organisations (CSOs) to discuss persistent governance and environmental challenges affecting local communities. The discussion focused on systemic issues such as lack of transparency, weak accountability, and widespread violations of indigenous rights in Sarawak's natural resource management, particularly in relation to the timber sector.

CSOs explored strategies to push Sarawak towards greater transparency and accountability in the exploitation of its natural resources. This included examining existing tools that could be used to strengthen governance frameworks. The potential role of federal agencies in monitoring corruption, especially in timber licensing and land concessions, was discussed, as was the urgent need to make Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) a mandatory element in all development planning processes. FPIC remains absent from Sarawak's legal framework, leaving indigenous communities vulnerable to exploitation and exclusion from decisions that directly impact their native customary lands.

The meeting also addressed how cooperation could be enhanced among CSOs within Sarawak, and Peninsular Malaysia, and international partners, in order to build stronger alliances and respond more effectively to these challenges. A key case study discussed was the logging operations of Borneoland Timber Resources Sdn Bhd, which pose an immediate threat to the Penan community forests in Upper Baram. Other pressing examples of environmental degradation were shared, including the case of Samling Group's subsidiary, Sara Carbon, which is currently conducting a forest carbon project

in Marudi. Despite its presentation as a sustainable initiative, concerns were raised over the project's lack of meaningful community consent, again due to the absence of FPIC in Sarawak's legal framework. CSOs also highlighted long-standing struggles in obtaining access to Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA), permits, and consultation records. Meetings with state authorities were described as procedural formalities rather than genuine engagements, with decisions often made without community knowledge or consent.

As a way forward, CSOs agreed on a series of priority actions for civil society. These include intensifying efforts to map deforestation and land use conflicts, identifying and exposing legal and policy gaps, and developing targeted legal strategies to challenge the power of the state executive. There was strong support for launching exposés and public awareness campaigns, particularly through social media that document the struggles of indigenous communities. To increase visibility and public engagement, participants proposed bringing in communications experts to support outreach efforts. In addition, the group emphasised the need to leverage mechanisms such as the Right to Information (RTI) to demand transparency and to lobby Sarawak's elected representatives (ADUNs) for legislative reforms. Strengthening alliances and sustaining public pressure were seen as key to challenging the entrenched systems of power and environmental mismanagement in the state. The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to deepen collaboration and pursue the key actions to defend the rights of Sarawak's communities and ecosystem.

OUTREACH
& SPEAKING
ENGAGEMENTS



Misgovernance: Grand Corruption in Malaysia Book Launch and Public Forum

Held in Kuala Lumpur on the 14th of May 2025

On 14 May 2025, C4 Center launched *Misgovernance: Grand Corruption in Malaysia*, a book authored by Professor Emeritus Edmund Terence Gomez. In addition to this launch, C4 Center partnered with the Coalition for Business Integrity (CBI) to co-host a forum that sought to bring the issues of Malaysian small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to the forefront – with the perceived culture of corruption in the country becoming widespread.

This forum worked in tandem with the contents of *Misgovernance: Grand Corruption in Malaysia*, which attempts to reimagine the meaning of “corruption” in Malaysia. In it, key insights into extensive abuse of power perpetuated by governing elites, who have long taken advantage of Malaysia’s government-linked company (GLC) ecosystem.

Featuring prominently within his writings are multiple accounts of government-business controversies between 1980 and 2023, which tracks the development of a powerful and covert “Political-GLC complex” – controlled ultimately by the Cabinet. This long list of controversies, along with three case studies, elucidates the intimate and illicit connections between governing elites and the





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tive on the impact of corruption on international trade. Additionally, Lim Chee Yoong and Edwin Ng spoke on the vast challenges faced by Malaysian SMEs due to the culture of corruption that has become prevalent in Malaysia.

It is our hope that in facilitating this conversation, greater collaboration can be achieved in the future through a multi-sectoral approach towards anti-corruption efforts. Only through a combined, collective action can the reform agenda's aspirations be achieved.

businesses under their control.

More than just a simple book launch, this event aimed to generate discourse on the urgent need for reform in Malaysia. Here, a wide range of discussions were held to sound the drum of change in various areas, including the GLC ecosystem, Malaysia's public institutions, and the private sector. Involved in these discussions were prominent members of politics, civil society, and the private sector, namely:

- **YB Wong Chen**, Member of Parliament, Subang
- **Lim Koon Huan**, Partner, Skrine Advocates and Solicitors
- **Lee Han Ling**, Executive Director, Malaysian International Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MICCI)
- **Lim Chee Yoong**, Representative, Malaysian Consortium of Mid-Tier Companies (MCMTCC)
- **Edwin Ng**, Vice President, Small and Medium Enterprises Association (SAMENTA)
- **Cynthia Gabriel**, Founding Director, C4 Center



During his session, YB Wong Chen spoke of the challenges in implementing the reform agenda. In particular, he shed light on the difficulties faced by Parliamentarians in attempting to carry out their duties. In that vein, YB Wong called attention to the various reforms needed to bolster the present system, including a transparent asset declaration framework, a robust political financing act, and greater Parliamentary oversight over the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission, among others.

The following session saw a total of four panelists, representing the private sector, speak on the topic, "Discussing the Impacts of Grand Corruption on Malaysian SMEs" – which was moderated by Cynthia Gabriel. Even from within the private sector, this group represented a broad range of interests, namely the legal fraternity, international trade groups, and SMEs.

Lim Koon Huan shared her experience working within the present legal and regulatory framework, highlighting the many ways SMEs are burdened by specific laws. Subsequently, Lee Han Ling provided perspec-





UNCAC Awareness Workshop

Held in Kuala Lumpur on the 8th of May 2025

On 8th May, C4 Centre was invited to participate in the workshop 'UNCAC Awareness and Implementation Workshop for Civil Society in Malaysia' hosted jointly by United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and Transparency International Malaysia (TI Malaysia). This event aimed to highlight how the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) applies to the work of non-governmental and civil society organisations addressing issues of governance and organized crime in Malaysia. The session opened with Mr. Justin Jarret (TI-Malaysia) presenting 'Exploring the Nexus Between Corruption and Crime – Reforms and Advocacy'. This started off the session with a theme of how corruption has a hand at play in

broader areas like environmental protection, human rights abuses, and migrant and refugee advocacy. Following this, Ms. Annika Wythes (UNODC Regional Anti-Corruption Adviser) led workshops on UNCAC review cycles and follow-up actions. Malaysia has completed two UNCAC review cycles, and her workshops suggested that while Malaysia has promising anti-corruption structures and institutions, they are not implemented adequately.

Throughout the workshop, C4 researchers were engaged with different discussion groups from mixed advocacy backgrounds. We discussed how UNCAC related back to their work, as well as areas where UNCAC was less active or had limited relevancy.



Focus Group Discussion: National Integrity Inculcation Strategy 2025 – 2030

Held in Kuala Lumpur on the 18th of June 2025

C4 Center was invited to participate in Perbincangan Kumpulan Fokus: Strategi Pembudayaan Integriti Nasional (Focus Group Discussion: National Integrity Inculcation Strategy) 2025 – 2030, organised by the Integrity Institute of Malaysia (IIM). The event took place on 18 June 2025, at the IIM office on Jalan Duta. The objective of the discussion was to collect suggestions from stakeholders on strategies and policy initiatives to strengthen integrity within general society as well as in the private sector, in line with the Twelfth Malaysia Plan.

The discussion gathered stakeholders from the public and private sector as well from civil society organisations to collect opinions about opportunities and challenges towards a culture of integrity in Malaysia. Each of the discussion topics sought to collate stakeholders' thoughts about Malaysia's socio-political climate, segregated into different scopes such as political,

legal, environmental, and so on. C4 Center's contribution there was to highlight the need to view the improvement of integrity not only as a change of attitude on an individual level, but also as one of structural reform and institutional strengthening. In particular, the need for the Political Financing and Government Procurement Acts were raised as vital towards creating a top-down implementation of integrity in governance.

According to IIM, this is the first of multiple focus group discussions – subsequent sessions will be aimed at discussing the points raised in this first session in more detail to be shaped into tangible policy positions and recommendations to the government. C4 Center will likely be invited to participate in further focus group discussions.



Navigating the Future of Malaysian Media: Press Freedom and AI's Double-Edged Sword

Held in Kuala Lumpur on the 17th of June 2025

On June 17th, C4 Centre was invited to attend the forum 'Navigating the Future of Malaysian Media: Press Freedom and AI's Double-Edged Sword', organised by the United Nations (UN), the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and the Centre for Independent Journalism (CIJ) as part of the World Press Freedom Day Forum 2025. The first panel focused on changing media freedom in the ASEAN region, with expert opinions from Ms. Wathshlah Naidu (CIJ Malaysia), Ms. Ninik Rahayu (Dewan Pres Indonesia), Mr. Antonio M.C.M. Mali (Timor-Leste Press Council), and Asst. Prof. Bhanubhatra (Representative of Thailand to the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights). Drawing from each country's context, the experts highlighted the significant improvements in press freedom throughout ASEAN. They stressed that the field still faces challenges as journalism expands from traditional publication to other forms like social media, and recommended the Press Council as the first line of defence for journalists in Malaysia.

The second panel focused on how AI can improve the working conditions for Malaysian journalists, with panellists Mr. Ashwad Ismail (ASTRO Awani), Ms. Jacque Manabat (National Union of Journalists Philippines), Assoc. Prof. Dr. Aini Suzana Datuk Hj Ariffin (Chair of the UNESCO STEPAN Network Asia and the Pacific), and Dr. Jun-E Tan (Khazanah Research Institute). Using case studies such as ASTRO's AI news anchors and AI training courses in the Philippines, the panel highlighted how AI is increasingly harnessed to improve journalist's work-life balances and improving the work output of investigative journalism. Throughout the panel, Dr. Jun-E Tan highlighted recent and pressing studies of AI Slop, AI biases, and unreliable data sources, as evidence for cautious and intentional implementation of AI into journalism writing processes, particularly in a region where journalistic integrity is historically challenged.



Universiti Malaya Consti Team Consti Colloquium

Held in Kuala Lumpur on the 31st of May 2025

On 31 May 2025, C4 Center was invited to take part as exhibitors in the Universiti Malaya Consti Team's (UMCT) Consti Colloquium event, an academic colloquium event aimed at promoting critical discourse on constitutional law among law students across Malaysia. As part of this event, the UMCT team set up an NGO booth section within their event venue, introducing participants to prominent non-governmental organisations in Malaysia that actively work in areas related to constitutional rights, human rights, and social justice. C4 Center was joined by the following NGOs throughout the event:

- All Women's Action Society of Malaysia (AWAM)
- Amnesty International Malaysia
- Dominic Gan & Co Law Firm
- Empower Malaysia
- Surahanjaya Hak Asasi Manusia Malaysia

(SUHAKAM)

- The Malaysian Centre for Constitutionalism and Human Rights (MCCHR)
- Women: Girls
- Yayasan Tan Sri Profesor Ahmad Ibrahim (YT-SPAI)

During the event, C4 Center was able to engage with a number of students to share their work and information on the latest developments on anti-corruption and institutional reform in Malaysia. Additionally, participants were made to take part in a short activity at C4 Center's booth wherein, they were asked to think of relevant reforms that they wished to see passed through by the end of the current government's term. This event allowed C4 Center to further expand its areas of advocacy towards the wider public, namely university students as part of a wider thrust in engaging the youth with issues of corruption.



Bila Kami Bersatu Documentary Screening and Panel Discussion

Held in Petaling Jaya on the 11th of June 2025

On 11 June 2025, Rumah Mandiri in Petaling Jaya hosted a screening of the documentary *Bila Kami Bersatu*, a moving film that captures the lives and struggles of four women from the Union of Private Sector Support Service Workers in Government Hospitals across Peninsular Malaysia (JPKK). Organised by the Malaysian NGO Mandiri, the event brought together activists, civil society representatives, and members of the public to reflect on the realities of labour in Malaysia's public healthcare system. The screening offered a rare and intimate look into the lived experiences of working-class women who form the backbone of essential hospital services.

The documentary follows these women and their fellow union members in their ongoing collective struggle to raise the minimum wage—a key demand that remains central to their fight for fair labour conditions. Interwoven with scenes of their everyday routines as hospital support staff, the film highlights the personal and political courage it takes to stand up

for worker rights in an increasingly unequal economy. Through their voices, *Bila Kami Bersatu* offers a powerful testimony to the importance of solidarity, dignity, and perseverance in the face of systemic challenges.

Following the screening, a panel discussion featured Minxi Chua, co-director of the documentary; Noraizan Riduan, Industrial Relations Officer and State Coordinator at JPKK; Pushpan Murugiah, CEO of C4 Center; and Wani Hamzah, Senior Research Officer at the Women's Aid Organisation (WAO). The conversation delved deeper into the documentary's themes, discussing the intersection of gender, labour rights, and activism in Malaysia. The event concluded with a vibrant Q&A session, where audience members expressed solidarity with the women in the film and reaffirmed the importance of ongoing advocacy for economic and social justice.



Presentation on Misgovernance: Grand Corruption in Malaysia at MICCI 52nd Annual General Meeting

Held in Kuala Lumpur on the 19th of June 2025

On 19 June 2025, the Malaysian International Chamber of Commerce & Industry (MICCI) held its 52nd Annual General Meeting at the Renaissance Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre. One of the key highlights of the event was a special presentation by Mr. Pushpan Murugiah, CEO of the Center to Combat Corruption & Cronyism (C4 Center), who was invited to speak on the groundbreaking book *Misgovernance: Grand Corruption in Malaysia* authored by Professor Terence Gomez. In his address, Mr. Pushpan provided a comprehensive overview of the historical and structural evolution of grand corruption in Malaysia, as detailed in the book. He articulated how the governance landscape had shifted through pivotal phases — from the post-independence drive to reclaim national assets, to the establishment of bureaucratic capitalism through statutory bodies, followed by the Mahathir-era transfer of national wealth to politically connected individuals, and culminating in the current entrenchment of political control over public assets via the Government-Linked Companies (GLC) complex. Mr. Pushpan drew attention to the GLC complex as a critical concern. He explained that this complex constitutes a vast network of GLCs, sovereign wealth funds, statutory bodies, and holding companies that are either directly or indirectly under political control. These entities dominate key sectors of the economy, and their governance is often opaque, lacking prop-

er checks and balances. The interweaving of political and corporate power, he emphasised, has created an environment where large-scale corruption can occur with impunity — as exemplified by the 1MDB scandal. He further noted that the current structure significantly undermines the private sector, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which often struggle to compete in a market where GLCs are afforded preferential treatment in procurement, financing, and regulatory access. Mr. Pushpan urged stakeholders to understand that grand corruption is not simply the result of individual misconduct but is deeply rooted in systemic governance failures. Importantly, his presentation called for a renewed partnership between civil society, government, and the private sector. He emphasised the need for collective action to dismantle corrupt structures, enhance corporate accountability, and promote an environment where ethical business practices can thrive. He also stressed the need to depoliticise GLC governance and introduce structural reforms to ensure public wealth is managed transparently and in the public interest. Mr. Pushpan's contribution provided an invaluable perspective on the role of the private sector in anti-corruption efforts and highlighted the importance of systemic reform in Malaysia's journey toward good governance and sustainable economic development.



Rakyat Benci Rasuah 2.0 Rally

Held in Kuala Lumpur on the 28th of June 2025

On 28 June 2025, C4 Center CEO Pushpan Murugiah and Policy & Legal Research Officer Prishanth Linggaraj attended and addressed the crowd at the Himpunan Rakyat Benci Rasuah 2.0 protest in Kuala Lumpur. The rally was organised by the Sekretariat Rakyat Benci Rasuah (SRBR), a coalition of NGOs and university student groups, as a continuation of their earlier anti-corruption mobilisations aimed at renewing pressure on the Madani government to fulfil its reform pledges. Protesters gathered at Sogo at 2:30 PM

and marched to Dataran Merdeka, carrying placards and chanting calls for institutional reform.

The protest centred on several key demands: the separation of powers between the Attorney General and the Prime Minister's Office, autonomy for the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), the introduction of a Political Financing Act, and accountability in unresolved corruption and custodial death cases. Among the speakers were student leaders and SRBR representatives, who voiced frustration over the government's perceived delay in implementing promised anti-corruption reforms.

The rally remained largely peaceful, although tensions briefly escalated during a performance act when police intervened and a participant was allegedly injured. SRBR condemned the incident, citing it as an infringement on the right to peaceful assembly. The protest served as a reminder of continued civil society pressure for meaningful structural change and reaffirmed the public's growing discontent with the slow pace of governance reform in Malaysia.



Q2 MEDIA ENGAGEMENTS

9 *Press Statements released
in Quarter 1 of 2025* → *At least*
40 *mentions of C4
Center in the media*



Views

157k

Likes

7.2k

Comments

3k

Shares

4k



Views

42.2k

Reach

18k

Interactions

1,480

*New
Follows*

128



Views

11.5k

Reach

3,624

Interactions

316

*New
Follows*

39
