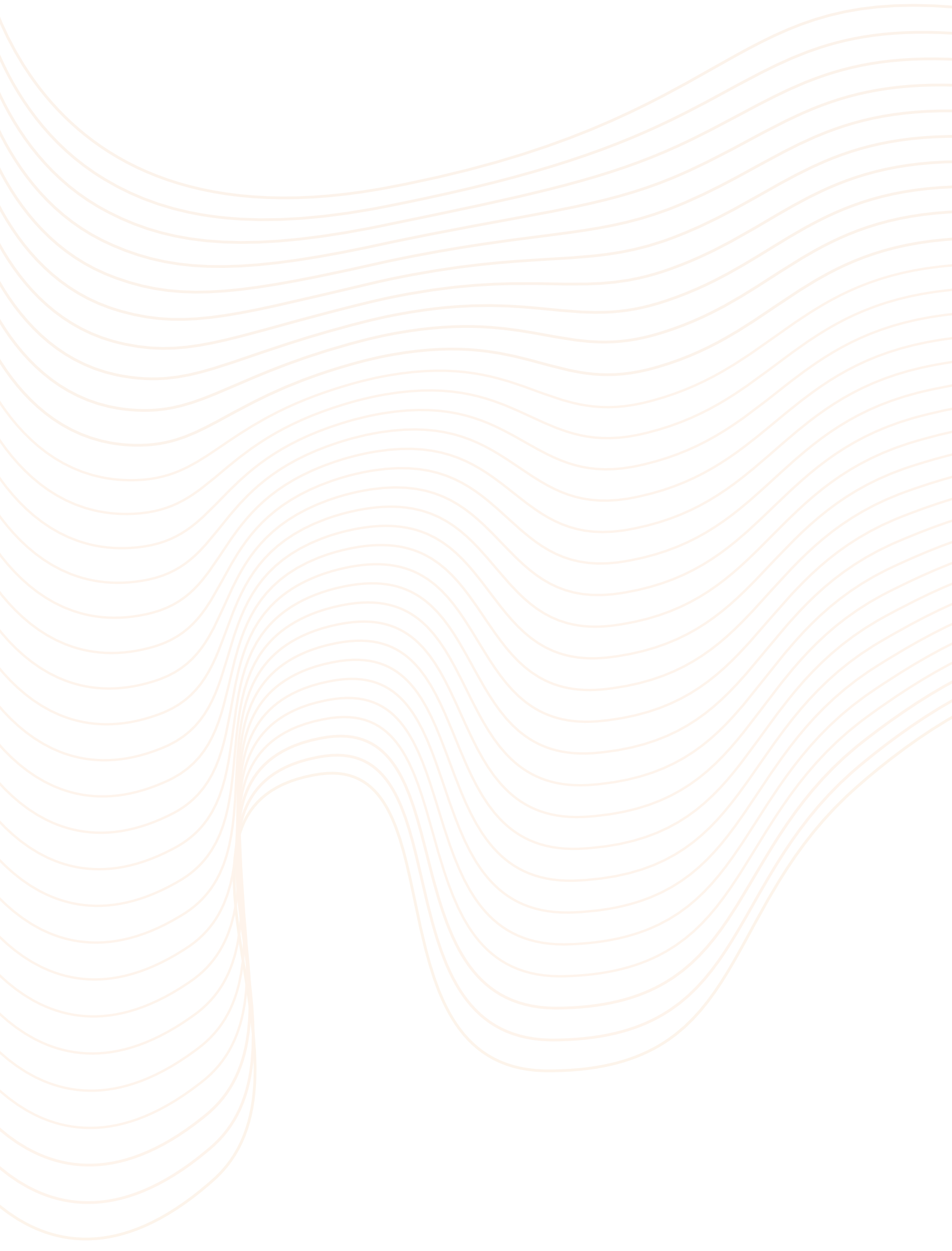




THE CENTER TO COMBAT  
CORRUPTION AND CRONYISM

# THE CENTER TO COMBAT CORRUPTION & CRONYISM 2026 FIRST QUARTERLY REPORT





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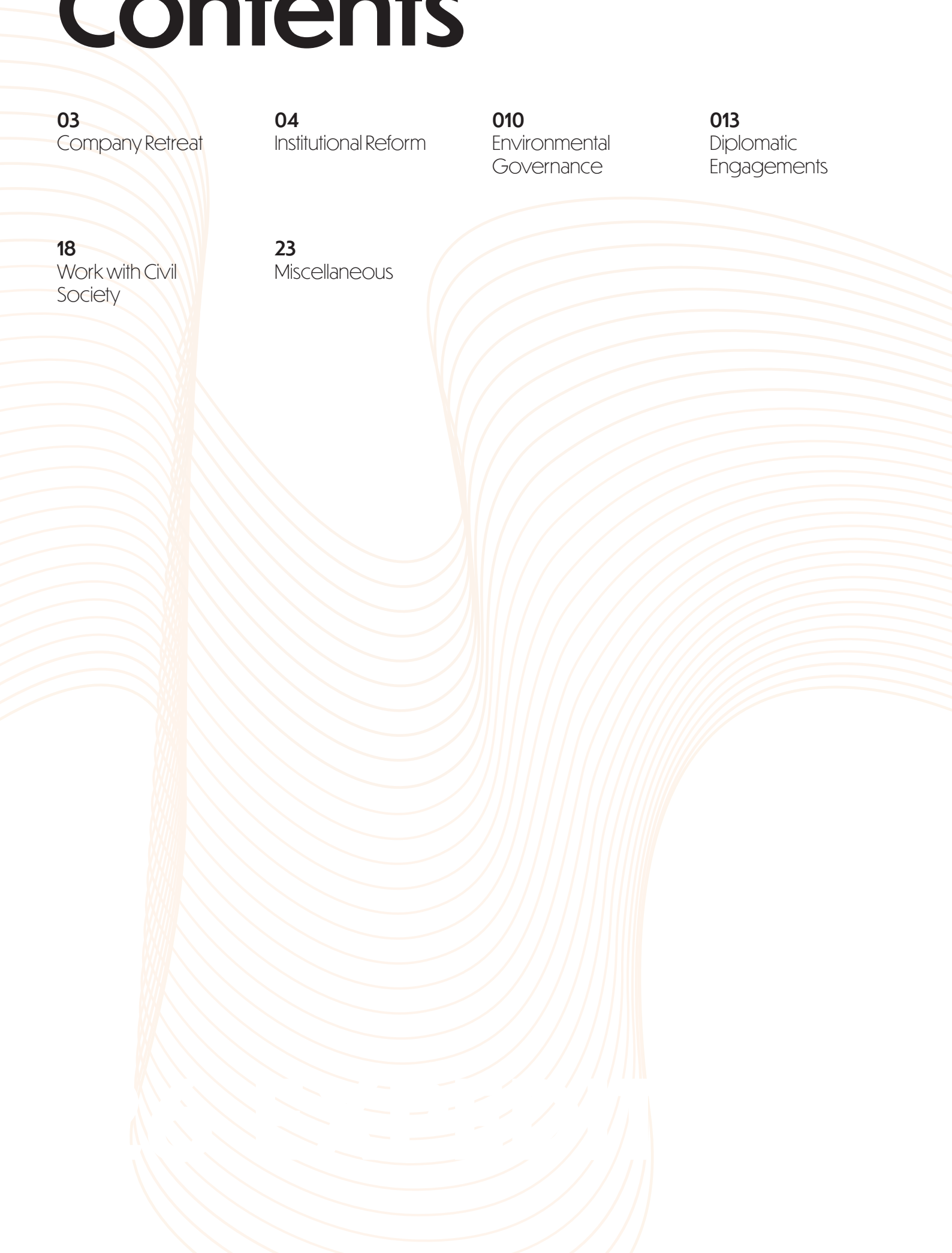
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# C4 Center's Company Retreat: Janda Baik



*Held in Janda Baik on the 27th to the 29th of January 2026*

From January 27th to 29th, 2026, the entire C4 Center team gathered for a rejuvenating trip to Janda Baik, Pahang. The 2 day retreat includes various refreshing group activities such as riding All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs), preparing BBQ during dinner, and more. The activities allowed the team to spend time together and strengthen the connection and communication amongst the team. During the retreat, the team has also managed to conduct a staff meeting, sharing project updates, planning upcoming activities, and aligning the team's direction with the company's objectives this year.





# Institutional Reform



# Malaysia Accountability Framework 2026 Task Force Meeting



*Held in Putrajaya on the 12th of January 2026*

C4 Center welcomes the invitation from the Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Law), Dato' Seri Azalina Othman Said, for civil society to participate in the task force on the four key reforms announced by the Prime Minister — term limits for the Prime Minister, separation of the Attorney-General (AG) and Public Prosecutor (PP), establishment of an Ombudsman, and a Freedom of Information Act.

The Legal Affairs Division of the Prime Minister's Department has been among the more progressive government departments in engaging the public and civil society on reforms under its purview. This approach should be replicated across government to democratise the law-making process.

The era of secrecy, over-reliance on the Official Secrets Act 1972 (OSA), and tabling laws without meaningful public consultation must end. In 2026, Malaysian society is mature enough to engage seriously on law reform.

# “Who Holds the MACC Accountable: Improving Oversight of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission” Report Launch



*Held in Petaling Jaya on the 26th of January 2026*

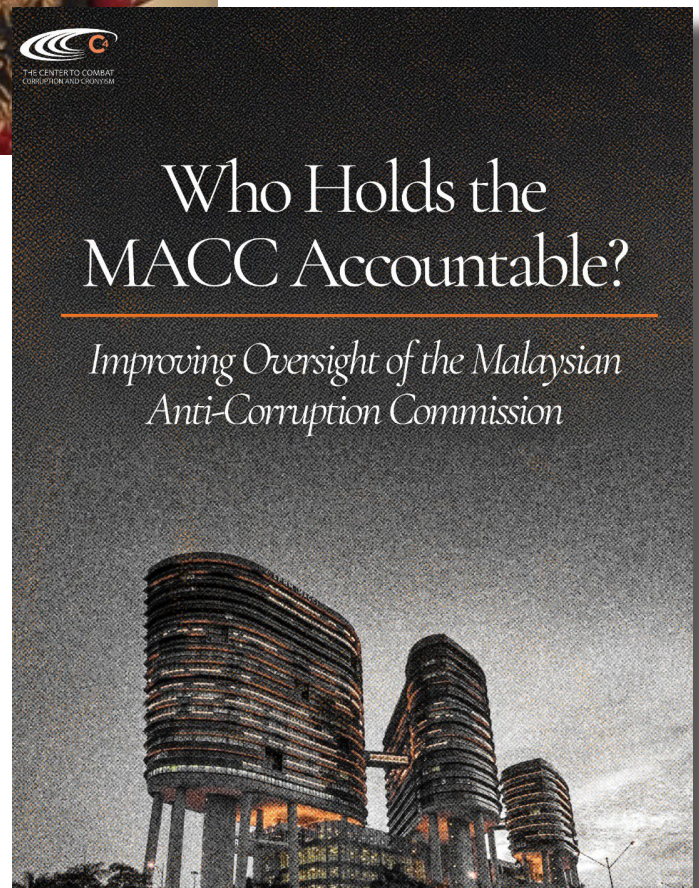
On 26 January 2026, C4 Center organised the launch of their report, “Who Holds the MACC Accountable: Improving Oversight of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission”, which assessed the effectiveness of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission’s (MACC) check-and-balance mechanism, revealing structural weaknesses in the MACC’s accountability and oversight framework. This launch saw participation from members of various Malaysian media outlets as well as civil society organisations throughout the Klang Valley.

C4 Center CEO Pushpan Murugiah began by addressing the longstanding issues plaguing the MACC as an institution. He highlighted how, for the longest time, public perception has been that the MACC is not independent, and that concerns remain over how much influence the Executive is able to exert over the agency. Subsequently, Head of Research and Policy Advocacy Arief Hamizan – elaborating on the key findings in the report – provided cutting analysis of the structure and functions of all five MACC “oversight bodies”. Here, it was described at length how each body’s functions were limited merely in advising the MACC, rather than ensuring meaningful

oversight.

Research and Communications Officer Benjamin Tiong continued by describing several key case studies identified within the research. These case studies displayed the failure of MACC’s accountability mechanisms, with each case study detailing how the existing structures and functions of the oversight bodies failed to provide adequate checks-and-balances over MACC officers accused of misconduct. The case studies highlighted were the 2021 Azam Baki Shareholding scandal and the Court of Appeal’s findings in Syed Saddiq’s corruption trial in 2025.

Ultimately, the launch of this report served as a means of developing targeted reform of the MACC, in the hopes of creating an independent and accountable anti-corruption regime.



# Focus Group Discussion on the Judicial Appointment System



*Held in Putrajaya on the 5th of March 2026*

C4 Center was invited by the Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Faculty of Law to take part in a focus group discussion on the judicial appointments system. This discussion is part of a research project undertaken by UiTM in collaboration with the Legal Affairs Division of the Prime Minister's Department to assess the legal and institutional structure of the judicial appointment system as well as current practices, to identify gaps to improve autonomy, transparency, and integrity.

C4 Center Policy and Legal Research Officer Prishanth Linggaraj attended the discussion and presented arguments in favour of democratising the appointment process and strengthening the

role currently played by the Judicial Appointments Commission. The judiciary has often acted as a bulwark against the executive abuse of power, and must be protected from any efforts to undermine the institution. C4 Center shall continue to speak up in favour of judicial independence.



# Inaugural Whistleblower Protection Committee Meeting



*Held in Putrajaya on the 17th of March 2026*

Following our official appointment as a committee member, C4 Center CEO Pushpan Murugiah participated in the inaugural Whistleblower Protection Committee meeting to help operationalize the Whistleblower Protection (Amendment) Act 2025. Under the newly established Section 5A of the Act, C4 Center now sits directly at the table with government and civil society partners to oversee the implementation of Act 711 and ensure transparent data collection. By taking on this formal role, C4 is committed to ensuring that these legal provisions move beyond mere bureaucracy to become a robust, independent shield for those who expose wrongdoing, ultimately fostering a national culture where integrity is prioritized over silence.



## “Searching for a Remedy: Assessing Malaysia’s Government Procurements Appeal and Grievance Mechanism” Report Launch

*Held in Kuala Lumpur on the 31st of March 2026*

On 31 March 2026, C4 Center organised the launch of their, “Searching for Remedy: Assessing Malaysia’s Government Procurements Appeal and Grievance Mechanism” report with the support of the British High Commission in Malaysia. The event saw the involvement of speakers and attendees from different backgrounds – ranging from civil society to members of the diplomatic community, as well as representatives from both the public and private sectors. This participation amounted to attendance from over 40 different organisations, spanning both within the Klang Valley and East Malaysia.

The event acted as a means of presenting our findings in regards to the gaps in the Government Procurement Act (GPA), while bringing the discussion to the forefront with the added input of experts both in the research space as well as the relevant government bodies. Additionally, the event sought to collect further feedback from various stakeholders on issues that currently persist with regards to the government procurement of

services as well as the agencies involved.

The event started with the presentation of the report from Senior Research and Communications Officer Bryan Cheah. Having scrutinised the appeals and remedy mechanisms within the GPA, numerous gaps in remedial powers, transparency, independence, as well as issues regarding the permanence of institutional decisions were uncovered. These findings were discovered through a thorough analysis of the GPA together with comparative analysis conducted on standards set by international conventions and trade agreements, as well as similar legislation from other common law jurisdictions, including the United Kingdom, Australia, and Singapore.

Ultimately, the presentation highlighted many aspects which require additional attention, from adopting core design features of the UNCITRAL Model Law on Public Procurement (2011), ensuring transparency through access to information reforms, as well as expanding the powers of the Appeals Tribunal, post-award.

The presentation was followed by a panel session which touched on wider issues in the administration of government procurements in

Malaysia. The panel session featured the following speakers:

- Ms. Sri Murniati Yusuf, Senior Fellow, Institute for Democracy and Economics Affairs (IDEAS)
- Mohd Hasbullah Mohd Faudzi, Principal Assistant Director, Malaysia Competition Commission (MyCC)
- Mr. Bryan Cheah, Senior Research and Communications Officer, C4 Center

Through their experience working within and researching on the procurement process in Malaysia, each panellist shared invaluable insights as to what was needed to ensure a truly fair, effective, and independent appeals process for future procurements. Through the launch of this report, and the subsequent forum, C4 Center hopes that tangible, actionable, and evidence-based advocacy efforts can be developed for the government to consider in their plans for procurement reform.



# Environmental Governance



## “Malaysia’s Steel Industry & Climate Commitments: Governance, Gaps, and Pathways” Report Launch

*Held in Kuala Lumpur on the 5th of March 2026*

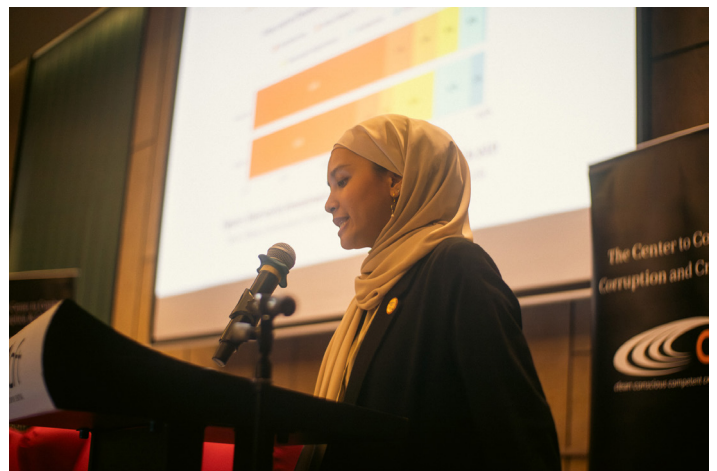
On 5 March, C4 Center launched a report titled, “Malaysia’s Steel Industry & Climate Commitments: Governance, Gaps, and Pathways”, which highlighted the need for Malaysia to address the loopholes in the governance of the iron and steel industry, as the hard-to-abate sector has a high risk of hindering Malaysia in achieving its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) targets, eventually contributing to the climate crisis if business-as-usual continues. The report examines governance, regulatory, and policy gaps surrounding GHG emissions in Malaysia’s steel industry, including concerns related to foreign ownership and influence. It highlights weaknesses in emissions data disclosure, enforcement mechanisms, and corporate accountability, while also reviewing existing government initiatives and identifying opportunities to integrate stronger climate governance practices into the industry.

The launch comes at a critical moment for Malaysia’s climate agenda. At COP30 in Belém, Malaysia committed to an updated NDC 3.0 to an unconditional reduction of up to 20 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>), alongside an additional conditional reduction of 10 million tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>. Achieving these targets, however, remains a significant challenge due to the high emissions from hard-to-abate sectors, particularly the steel industry. As one of the country’s key industrial sectors, Malaysia’s steel industry contributes more than RM28 billion to the national GDP

and supports over 280,000 jobs. At the same time, it remains highly carbon-intensive and is among the largest contributors to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions within the manufacturing and construction sector.

The event brought together policymakers, industry representatives, civil society organisations, and subject-matter experts to discuss how industrial development can better align with Malaysia’s climate commitments, while also addressing governance concerns related to transparency, accountability, and oversight within the steel industry sector.

The programme opened with welcoming remarks by Pushpan Murugiah, CEO of C4 Center, followed by an opening address from YB Tuan Syed Ibrahim Syed Noh, Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability (NRES), highlighting the need for a meaningful Climate Change Act (CCA). Professor Emeritus Edmund Terence Gomez, Chairman of C4 Center, delivered the keynote presentation, setting the context for discussions on governance, industrial



policy, and climate accountability.

The report findings were presented by Nabila Zulkeflee, Environmental Governance Research Officer at C4 Center and co-author of the report, alongside Pushpan Murugiah, who presented additional findings and concerns emerging from the research. During the Q&A session following the presentations, participants raised concerns regarding the growing influence of foreign investment, weak emissions governance, and the longstanding political-business nexus that continues to undermine environmental accountability within Malaysia’s steel sector. Discussions also highlighted the urgent need for stronger climate legislation, mandatory greenhouse gas disclosure, and verification mechanisms to ensure industrial development aligns with Malaysia’s climate commitments.



The event also featured a panel discussion moderated by Arief Hamizan, Head of Research and Policy Advocacy at C4 Center, with panellists Dato' Sri Tai Hean Leng, President of the Association of Malaysian-Owned Steel Enterprises (AMOSE), Hilary Kung, Senior Researcher at Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM), and Ts. Dr Nurul Muiz Murad, CEO of the Malaysia Steel Institute (MSI).

The panel discussion highlighted growing concerns over foreign dominance within Malaysia's steel industry, with speakers warning that the increasing use of conventional, high-emission technologies by foreign-owned companies risks undermining both local industry competitiveness and Malaysia's climate commitments. Panellists also emphasised the urgent need for stronger emissions disclosure frameworks, clearer decarbonisation strategies, meaningful implementation of the CCA and carbon pricing mechanisms, as well as greater collaboration between government, industry, and civil society to ensure a just and climate-resilient industrial transition.

Among its key findings, the report concludes that Malaysia's climate commitments risk being undermined by longstanding structural weaknesses within the steel sector, particularly in the corporate structure that is abused through government-to-government agreements. These include inadequate disclosure requirements, fragmented emissions governance, and the potential for political interference, all of which continue to hinder effective climate action and oversight.





# Diplomatic Engagements



## Meeting with Louise Aubin, UNHCR Representative in Kuala Lumpur

*Held in Petaling Jaya on the 9th of February 2026*

C4 Center representatives were invited to the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Kuala Lumpur to speak to Louise Aubin, the Representative in Kuala Lumpur. During the meeting, we provided an overview of C4 Center's work on corruption and governance and explored possible intersections with migrant and refugee rights. We also provided Louise and her team with key insights into the current sociopolitical landscape of Malaysia, and the challenges posed by anti-rights actors to holistic reform. We also discussed possible avenues for collaboration in the near future on topics of common concern.

We are extremely appreciative to the UNHCR for their time and interest in our work, and hope to continue strengthening our relationship.



## Jom! Australia: Reception at Australia High Commissioner's Residence

*Held in Kuala Lumpur on the 12th of February 2026*

In February, the Australian High Commissioner Danielle Heinecke hosted a series of receptions at her residence, humorously titled Jom! Australia. As a strong civil society partner of the Australia High Commission, C4 Center was invited to attend the event for a night of socialising and networking with other members

of civil society and think tanks, political figures, and academics. We are grateful for the longstanding working relationship with the Australia High Commission, and hope to continue this constructive partnership in our efforts towards advancing good governance in Malaysia.



## Meeting with Representatives from the New Zealand High Commission

*Held in Petaling Jaya on the 11th of March 2026*

C4 Center hosted two representatives from the New Zealand High Commission, Deputy Head of Mission Julian Tollestrup and Second Secretary Niki Menzies, to speak about the current state of governance and democracy in Malaysia. C4 Center was represented by CEO Pushpan Murugiah and Head of Research and Policy Advocacy Arief Hamizan. During the meeting, we provided an overview of C4 Center's work to the New Zealand High Commission - explaining the key interventions we perform in advancing principles of anti-corruption and good governance. We also discussed possible

avenues for collaboration in the near future on topics of common concern.

We are extremely appreciative to the New Zealand High Commission for their time and effort in coming to our office, and hope to continue strengthening our relationship.

# Meeting with Representatives from the Australia High Commission

*Held in Petaling Jaya on the 13th of March 2026*



C4 Center hosted two representatives from the Australia High Commission, Second Secretary Imogen D'Souza and Program Manager Mahirah Marzuki, to speak about the current state of governance and democracy in Malaysia. C4 Center was represented by CEO Pushpan Murugiah, Head of Research and Policy Advocacy Arief Hamizan, and Policy and Legal Research Officer Prishanth Linggaraj. As Imogen is the new replacement for former Second Secretary Gabriela Brand, we presented an overview of C4 Center's work to introduce her to the context within which the organisation operates. We also discussed possible avenues for collaboration in line with Australian foreign policy priorities.

We are extremely appreciative to the Australia High Commission for their time and effort in coming to our office, and hope to continue strengthening our relationship.



# Work with Civil Society



# Forum on Strengthening the Ombudsman Institution in Sarawak

*Held in Kuching on the 8th of January 2026*

On 8 January 2026, C4 Center together with Rise of Social Efforts (ROSE) Sarawak and CSO Platform for Reform organised the “Forum on Strengthening the Ombudsman Institution in Malaysia” in Kuching, Sarawak. The event was officiated by State Deputy Minister in the Premier’s Department of Sarawak of Integrity and Ombudsman, YB Dato’ Murshid Diraja Dr. Juanda. During his speech, he spoke of the Sarawak Government’s initiatives in establishing a public complaints body in the form of Sarawak Ombudsman, which

“check-and-balance” mechanism capable of ensuring that public institutions are serving the best interests of the public. Joining him in the panel discussion were Mr. Albert Tang, Ombudsman of the Sarawak Ombudsman Office, and YB Wilfred Yap, State Legislative Assemblyperson of Kota Sentosa, with moderation handled by Mr Geoffrey Tang, President of ROSE.

Over 40 participants coming from civil society organisations, academia, student groups, professionals, and civil servants attended the forum as a means of understanding how human, civil, and democratic rights can be upheld by a strong public complaints process. Notably, this forum marked a significant chapter in Sarawak, as it was the first public engagement held between the Sarawak Ombudsman, elected representatives, and civil society.

attempts to address issues of integrity, transparency, and accountability.

During the panel session, C4 Center CEO Pushpan Murugiah had the opportunity to speak on the role of civil society as a





# Government Procurement Act: Implications and the Way Forward for Civil Society in Sarawak

*Held in Kuching on the 8th of January  
2026*



On 8 January 2026, C4 Center organised the “Government Procurement Act: Implications and the Way Forward for Civil Society” roundtable discussion in Kuching, Sarawak. This event was one of three different civil society engagements on the Government Procurement Act (GPA) organised by C4 Center with the support of the British High Commission in Malaysia. As part of this event, C4 Center invited and engaged with several civil society organisations, activists, academicians, political parties, and local government representatives in Sarawak to improve awareness and understanding of the GPA.

C4 Center Senior Research and Communications Officer Bryan Cheah began by giving an overview of the GPA as well as the law’s implications on various different areas. The session continued with a freeflow roundtable discussion monitored by C4 Center CEO Pushpan Murugiah

and Head of Research and Policy Advocacy Arief Hamizan.

During this session, participants were given the opportunity to discuss concerns, reforms, and long-term future of government procurement in Malaysia. Around 18 different Sarawak-based organisations took part in these discussions, which were part of C4 Center’s larger research on the GPA, with the discussion’s findings being incorporated into a report on the Act. The research attempted to develop targeted and effective advocacy methods to safeguard Malaysia’s procurement system from potential abuses.



# Government Procurement Act: Implications and the Way Forward for Civil Society in Sabah

*Held in Kota Kinabalu on the 7th of February 2026*

On 7 February 2026, C4 Center organised the “Government Procurement Act: Implications and the Way Forward for Civil Society” roundtable discussion in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. This event was one of three different civil society engagements on the GPA organised by C4 Center with the support of the British High Commission in Malaysia.

During this event, different civil society organisations covering a range of different issues such as gender and equality, environmental protection and conservation, equitable access to healthcare, and citizenship rights attended and participated. Initially, C4 Center Senior Research and Communications Officer Bryan Cheah began with a brief rundown on the GPA, with the event proceeding with a wider discussion on relevant

case studies, concerns, and desired reforms in relation to procurement within their respective contexts.

These discussions were part of C4 Center’s larger research on the GPA, with the discussion’s findings being incorporated into a wider report on the Act. Through this research, it is hoped that targeted and effective advocacy methods can be developed to safeguard Malaysia’s procurement system from potential abuses.



# Tangkap Azam Baki Rally

*Held in Kuala Lumpur on the 15th of February*

The Tangkap Azam Baki protests represent a series of public demonstrations in Malaysia centered on demands for accountability and the arrest of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) Chief Commissioner, Azam Baki. On February 15, 2026, C4 Center CEO Pushpan Murugiah attended the rally, delivering an emphatic speech that resonated strongly with the crowd. These rallies were ignited by allegations regarding the improper ownership of corporate shares, which protesters argue compromised the integrity of the nation's premier anti-graft body. The movement has seen a resurgence in 2026, fueled by additional reports of alleged power misuse and a perceived lack of transparency in resolving these

long-standing controversies.

Beyond the streets, the movement has faced significant legal scrutiny, with several human rights defenders and activists being investigated under the Penal Code for their involvement in "Tangkap Azam Baki" demonstrations. These arrests have sparked a wider debate regarding the freedom of assembly and the right to criticize public officials in Malaysia. As the government navigates these calls for reform, the protests remain a potent symbol of the public's demand for a transparent and untainted anti-corruption framework.





# Miscellaneous

# Malaysian Law Student Network (MLSN) Visit



*Held in Petaling Jaya on the 6th of February 2026*

On 6 February 2026, a group of law students from the Malaysian Law Student Network (MLSN) visited the C4 Center office as a part of their 14th Legal Adventour programme, which offers the students to explore and understand various working experiences beyond legal practice.

The programme started with an opening remark by Pushpan Murugiah, who set the context by discussing the anti-corruption landscape in Malaysia and introducing C4 Center's work and advocacy areas to the students. This was followed by an engageful sharing session with Arief Hamizan, Nabila Zulkeflee, and Bryan Cheah. The session fostered meaningful discussions and allowed students to gain practical insights into advocacy work, public policy, and the broader realities of governance and accountability efforts in Malaysia.



# Police investigations of free speech echo darkest periods of state repression



*Kuala Lumpur on the 9th of March 2026*

On 9 March 2026, C4 Center CEO Pushpan Murugiah received a notice pursuant to Section 112 of the Criminal Procedure Code, requiring him to appear at the Bukit Aman Police Headquarters for examination on the following day. The investigating officer was subsequently contacted for further details, and it was revealed that the investigations were being conducted for an offence under Section 124B of the Penal Code, i.e. activity detrimental to parliamentary democracy.

On 10 March 2026, Pushpan's examination by the police was held and lasted for about 1.5 hours. The lines of questioning revealed some concerning issues regarding the police's perspectives on freedom of speech and expression by political activists and commentators. Several other individuals had also been summoned to Bukit Aman for the investigation, including political commentators and academics. The investigation centered on allegations of high-powered individuals seeking to topple the government through collusion with

international actors.

Pushpan was apparently being examined because his name had appeared in an email which was allegedly salient to the offence under investigation. Yet the line of questioning went far beyond the email alone. The questions posed to Pushpan sought to scrutinise the operations and autonomy of C4 Center; with queries on sources of funding and whether the organisation had received instructions to say or do certain things. Pushpan was also challenged on C4 Center's right to make comments on matters of public importance and national governance, with officers questioning our standing to make such comments.

Ever since our establishment in 2014, C4 Center has maintained a consistent stance against corruption and abuse of power in Malaysia. Our non-partisan position has endured through the changing administrations. We will never serve as a mouthpiece for others' agendas, for our role is in advancing the public interest of the nation.

The police's approach to the questioning belies a far more concerning matter, which harkens back to the habits of previous administrations

who weaponised the law to silence dissent. Framing honest and fair criticism of political figures as conspiracies to "topple the government" is ridiculously undemocratic. Does this mean that activists, journalists, and academics working in Malaysia now have to contend with the possibility of being investigated for "activity detrimental to parliamentary democracy" anytime they criticise political leaders?

This presents a frightening vision of a Malaysia in regression, and civil society must take a stand to prevent further decline of the hard-fought freedoms we have won over the past few years. We call upon the government to affirm that the criminal law shall not be used to silence free speech, political dissent, and fair critique of the government. This incident should be viewed as a canary in the coal mine for freedom of speech, and must not be a precursor of more stringent repression in the future.

# Social Media Engagements

## Q1 2026 Social Media Analytics & Strategic Re-Alignment

Following a milestone year in 2025, which yielded record-breaking organic engagement metrics driven by a high-volume output strategy and a focus on video-based content, our social media performance in Q1 2026 experienced anticipated stabilization. Total engagement numbers across most platforms adjusted downward compared to the previous quarter. Crucially, this is not a reflection of declining brand health, but rather a direct outcome of an intentional, strategic reduction in posting frequency. Conversely, Instagram defied this trend, showing net growth despite lower output.

In 2025, our strategy prioritized volume through a high-frequency posting schedule. While this successfully maximized aggregate numbers across the board, it is not sustainable as it required a massive expenditure of creative resources and risked long-term audience content fatigue. What we have also discovered is that video-based content performs much higher than image and text-based posts.

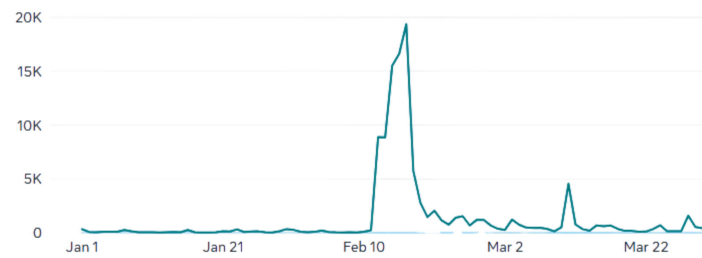
Entering Q1 2026, we deliberately scaled back production volume to optimize internal workflows. Because standard platform algorithms heavily weigh raw recency and post-count to accumulate baseline metrics, a direct correlation exists between our reduced output and the contraction in overall quarterly numbers.

While platforms like Facebook and Tiktok saw a dip in total numbers due to fewer posts, Instagram metrics increased. This anomaly is highly significant and validates our current strategic trajectory.

Moving into the remainder of 2026, we are applying the lessons learned from our Instagram growth across all remaining channels. Our focus will remain on a sustainable, lower-frequency posting model. This ensures we protect our creative bandwidth, maintain brand positioning, and build a captive, genuinely engaged audience rather than chasing passive, volume-based metrics.

### Instagram

Views <sup>📈</sup> 160.6K ↑ 86.2% 48,373 views 112,260 views Reach <sup>📈</sup> 39.9K ↑ 62.1% Content interactions <sup>📈</sup> 5K ↑ 72.1%

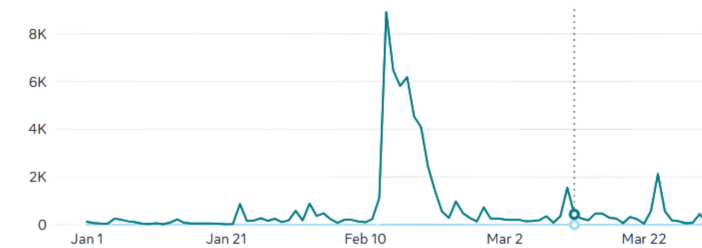


#### Views breakdown

Jan 1 - Mar 31  
**Total**  
 112,260 ↑ 35%  
**From organic**  
 112,260 ↑ 35%  
**From ads**  
 0 0%

### Facebook

Views <sup>📈</sup> 63.5K 3-second views <sup>📈</sup> 2.4K Content interactions <sup>📈</sup> 1.4K Watch time <sup>📈</sup> 15h 55m



#### Views breakdown

Jan 1 - Mar 31  
**Total**  
 63,508  
**From organic**  
 63,508  
**From ads**  
 0 0%

### Tiktok

Video views 3.2K	Profile views 83	Likes 87	Comments -48	Shares 12	Est. rewards --
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