

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Navigating the Truth: Upholding Integrity in Malaysia's Refugee Debate**

**CYBERJAYA, 20 AUGUST 2024** — In light of the recent heated debates and media coverage concerning the treatment and reception of refugees in Malaysia, the Communications and Multimedia Content Forum of Malaysia (Content Forum) reminds all media practitioners, content creators, and the public of the critical importance of upholding ethical standards and engaging in responsible discourse when addressing sensitive topics like this.

The Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Content Code (Content Code) provides clear guidelines to ensure that content disseminated across electronic networks is fair, accurate, and free from content that could incite hatred, discrimination, or violence against any individual or group, which includes refugees. Adhering to these guidelines is essential not only to maintain public trust but also to prevent the escalation of social tension. As media professionals, there is an obligation to report news in a manner that is factual, balanced, and sensitive to the potential impact on affected communities.

It is crucial to remember that refugees are among the most vulnerable groups in society. Any portrayal that fuels suspicion, hate, or discrimination against them is not only unethical but can have serious real-world consequences. Such actions can exacerbate social divisions, leading to marginalisation and further harm to already vulnerable populations. Irresponsible reporting and online discourse that propagate stereotypes or unfounded allegations against refugees go against the spirit of our diverse and inclusive society.

To safeguard ethical standards and foster a more inclusive dialogue, the Content Forum urges all media and content creators to:

1. **Ensure Accuracy and Fairness:** All reports should be fact-checked, and multiple perspectives should be considered to provide a balanced view on issues relating to refugees. It is always advisable to consult experts and rely on verified sources to avoid the spread of misinformation.
2. **Avoid Sensationalism:** Content that exaggerates or distorts facts to provoke an emotional response should be avoided. Sensationalist reporting can inflame tensions and lead to divisive outcomes, ultimately undermining the integrity of the media.
3. **Respect Human Dignity:** Refugees, like all individuals, deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. Avoid language or imagery that dehumanises or vilifies them. This respect for human dignity is a cornerstone of responsible journalism.
4. **Promote Constructive Discourse:** Encourage dialogue that fosters understanding, empathy, and solutions, rather than perpetuating division and hostility. Engaging in constructive discourse guides society to bridge divides, foster mutual respect, and build a more cohesive and just community.

The Content Forum stands by the principle that self-regulation is key to maintaining high standards in media and content creation. Through self-regulation, the industry can uphold ethical practices without the need for external enforcement, thereby preserving media freedom while ensuring accountability. We call on all stakeholders to adhere to these principles,



ensuring that their platforms contribute positively to society and uphold the integrity of our media landscape.

Any content that appears to violate these principles of ethical and responsible discourse can be reported to the Content Forum. Vigilance in this matter is essential to maintaining high standards of integrity and respect across media and online platforms in Malaysia.

It is anticipated that collaborative efforts will facilitate ethical and responsible communication that reflects the values of empathy, respect, and unity that are fundamental to the Malaysian identity.

## **The Content Forum**

**20 August 2024**

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### **ABOUT THE CONTENT FORUM**

The Communications and Multimedia Content Forum of Malaysia (Content Forum) is an industry forum registered under the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) and designated by the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998 (CMA'98) to oversee and promote self-regulation of content over the electronic networked medium. The Content Forum consists of key players in the content industry, i.e., advertisers, advertising agencies, broadcasters, content creators/distributors, audiotext hosting service providers, advertising agencies, internet service providers, and civic groups.

Aimed at facilitating self-regulation, which provides an additional layer of consumer protection that complements the legal framework, the Content Forum is committed to governing and promoting the creation, distribution, and consumption of electronic-networked content.

As an industry self-regulatory body, the Content Forum comprises key members of the communications and multimedia content industry, including broadcasters, advertisers, content creators, internet access service providers, and civic groups. This dynamic and robust representation of industry practitioners ensures that content standards continue to be developed with the objective of establishing a level playing field in the industry.

The Content Forum is responsible for the implementation and enforcement of the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Content Code ("the Content Code"). The Content Code was prepared by the Content Forum and first registered with MCMC on 1st September 2004. The Content Code is the principal source for industry self-regulation as it contains governing standards and best practices for content dissemination within the communications and multimedia industry in Malaysia. The main objective of the Content Code is to outline



procedures of self-regulation that provides the platform for creativity, innovation and healthy growth of a fast-evolving industry.

The Content Forum houses a Complaints Bureau that is empowered to address all complaints relating to content disseminated over electronic networks. The Complaints Bureau is empowered to investigate possible breaches of the Content Code, mediate disputes, adjudicate cases, publish orders, and impose sanctions where necessary. The Complaints Bureau accepts complaints from industry players and the general public. Additionally, it plays an advisory role to any party that requires guidance on electronic content matters.

**Issued by GO Communications on behalf of the Content Forum**

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