

25<sup>th</sup> April 2020

## Deplorable online attacks against women human rights defender

EMPOWER Malaysia is extremely concerned about harassment and threats against a women human rights defender for speaking up about the dire situation of Rohingya refugees.

Tengku Emma Zuriana, a volunteer for The European Rohingya Council, has been facing online attacks for an article she posted on the plight of Rohingya refugees. In her letter sent to [malaysiadateline.com](mailto:malaysiadateline.com), which was published on 21 April 2020, she has asked the Malaysian government to consider reversing their decision to push back a Rohingya boat to sea.

Since the publication of her letter online, Tengku Emma has become the victim of online harassment. She has been receiving threats, accused of being a human trafficker and has been doxed by online trolls. The escalating harassment has prompted her to lodge a police report as she is worried about her safety.

EMPOWER Malaysia finds these acts of online abuse against Tengku Emma deplorable. No one should be targeted for expressing themselves and online violence and abuse are a direct threat to this freedom of expression.

We call on the authorities to take serious steps to investigate this and bring the perpetrators to justice. They should also ensure that she receives any protection she may require.

Women human rights defenders (WHRDs) are increasingly facing new forms of harassment, intimidation and defamation online they often spill over into the real world. They often lead to self-censorship and hinder their full participation in public life.

The government must publicly and unequivocally condemn such attacks against WHRDs, investigate them and in consultation with WHRDs, ensure they receive the specific protection they need.

In Solidarity,

PERSATUAN KESEDARAN KOMUNITI SELANGOR (EMPOWER Malaysia)