

# 24 witnesses called to testify in public inquiry on Pastor Koh

NST 11.10.2017 5  
By Eric BAGANG

**KOTA KINABALU:** A total of 24 witnesses will be called to testify in the public inquiry on the disappearance of Pastor Raymond Koh, social activist Amri Che Mat, Pastor Joshua Hilmi and his wife Ruth Hilmi.

The inquiry chairman, Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (Suhakam) commissioner, Datuk Mah Weng Kwai said that letters have been issued to the witnesses that comprise among others, enforcement agencies personnel.

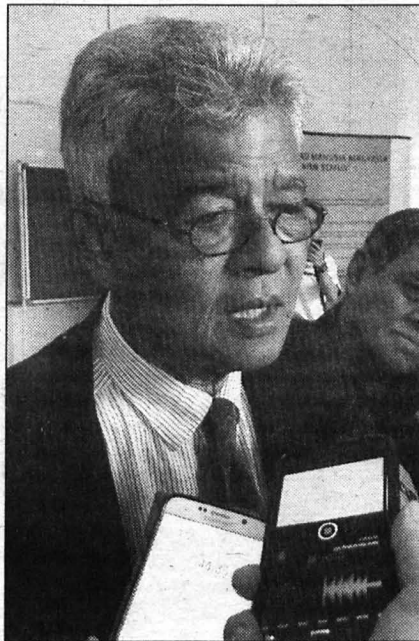
The inquiry will be held by Suhakam in accordance with section 12(1) of the Human Rights Commission Act.

He said, the inquiry which is scheduled to start on October 19, is intended to find out what happened to the four individuals who went missing in three cases.

"We don't know where they are. Whether they were abducted by criminals or unseen hands from the agencies, we hope to find out. We want to find out what breaches of the laws involved, not only criminal law, but human rights.

"There are two ways to look at it, first, the public has the right to know what transpired (in the cases), and the other is if there is no wrongdoing by any agencies or anyone, we should also say so, to clear all these allegations hanging around," he said when met at the UMS-Suhakam special lecture on human rights in Malaysia and the region at the university campus here yesterday.

According to him, if the witnesses do not respect the subpoenas issued to them, they can be charged under the Penal Code.

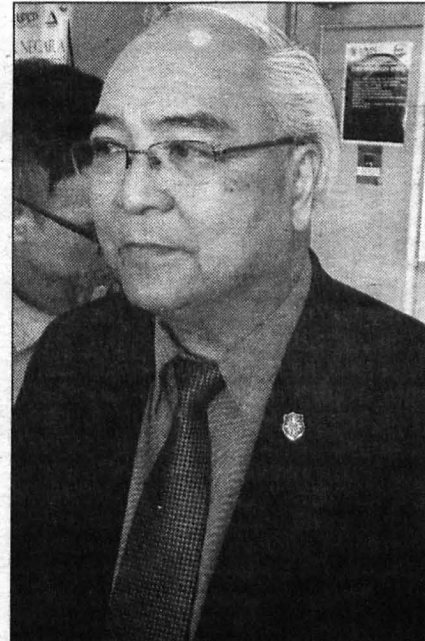


Razali

Koh was abducted on February 13 by a group of men along Jalan SS4B/10 in Petaling Jaya, and Amri was taken from his car in Perlis in November last year while Joshua and Ruth have been missing since last year.

Meanwhile, when speaking of the lecture, Suhakam chairman, Tan Sri Razali Ismail said that he is satisfied with the overwhelming response from the student of UMS.

"We have to come again more often to talk about human rights and other things. Sabah is a good example of racial har-



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mony where everyone is respecting the rights of others," he said.

In his lecture, he also spoke of the needs for the government to have a regulation in taking care of the rights of non-citizens in Sabah especially stateless children.

"As a matter of principle, we support the rights of the people although they are not citizens, their rights should also be given consideration, but a regulation must be in place to ensure that people of Sabah will not lose out in taking care of the non-citizens rights," he said.