



SEAFORB

SEAFORB Webinar 1: Harmony Laws in Southeast Asia: Policing Faiths, Infringing Rights

Date: November 22nd, 2021

Time: 02.00-03.30 GMT/09.00-10.30 Bangkok (GMT +7). Find your time zone here [HERE](#)

Registration: <https://forms.gle/qowovhryLV1DDMB36>

Meeting link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88551821007?pwd=bIIZNnZBeUJXd0xPY3loRUk2S1pEUT09>

Governments in Southeast Asia often proclaim that they promote and protect racial and religious harmony through their domestic laws. On occasions they even insist that these laws are aligned with international standards. However, in reality, evidence from the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and Committee on Racial Discrimination (CERD) suggests otherwise. When challenged, government representatives will claim that international human rights mechanisms or other states do not understand their countries' exceptional circumstances and hence could not appreciate their progress thus far. However, these legal measures often police the freedom of religious and racial expression and discriminate against minorities. Asia Centre's new baseline study *Harmony Laws in Southeast Asia: Policing Hate, Repressing Rights* examines the situation in Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines and Singapore. All four countries are ethnically and religiously diverse nations with divisive, painful colonial legacies and have long grappled with ethnic and religious tensions accentuated by contemporary migration. The launch of Asia Centre's new report and panel discussion is part of the 7th SEAFoRB International Conference.

Speakers



Pavitra Ramanujam is Project Coordinator at the Association for Progressive Communications (APC) where she works on issues related to internet freedoms, digital rights and policy in Asia with specific emphasis on freedoms of expression and freedom of religion or belief.



Dr. James Gomez is Regional Director at Asia Centre. He provides strategic oversight for the Centre and oversees its operations in both Thailand and Malaysia. Dr. Gomez brings to Asia Centre over 25 years of international and regional experiences in leadership roles at universities, think-tanks, inter-governmental agencies and non-governmental organisations.



Khin Mai Aung is on the advisory board of Asia Centre and is the U.S. coordinator for the Free Rohingya Coalition, an international grassroots activist network. She was born in Yangon, Myanmar, and immigrated to the United States as a child. She writes about domestic and international civil rights issues for the Berkely Center at Georgetown University.



Lutfi Hakim Ariff is an independent communications professional based in Kuala Lumpur. He has previously served in various roles in government, INGOs, research, and the private sector, in areas such as financial inclusion, human rights, and issues management. He also writes and produces a podcast on current affairs in Malaysia.



John Philip Binondo is Assistant Professor in International Studies at De La Salle University Manila. He has taught international studies courses with strong emphasis on human rights. He also assists students in integrating human rights based approaches to their community development interventions and advocacies.

This event is organized by



The Southeast-Asia Freedom of Religion or Belief (SEAFORB) Network is a coalition of organizations working to protect and promote the Human Right of Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) in Southeast-Asia. Members come from diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds, nevertheless they stand together in unity to promote FORB for all.