

Press Statement by Teoh Beng Hock Trust for Democracy on 18 July 2020 in Petaling Jaya

**Prolonged interrogation is a form of psychological torture**

Teoh Beng Hock Trust for Democracy condemns Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) for interrogating former youth and sports minister Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman for 11 hours till 9pm at the headquarter of MACC in Putrajaya on 17 July 2020.

We stress that unnecessary and prolonged interrogation is a form of psychological torture, as it creates tremendous tension, jeopardize one's mental health and allows abuse of power while in custody. Prolonged interrogation infringes everyone's right to rest as stated in article 24 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

We have been repeatedly criticizing human rights violations committed by MACC since the political death of Teoh Beng Hock on 16 July 2009. MACC's lengthy interrogation of Teoh for at least 11 hours, from 6pm on 15 July until 5am on 16 July, which allowed abuse of power and

eventually led to his demise.

We also condemned MACC for prolonged interrogating Riza Shahriz Abdul Aziz, the stepson of former Prime Minister Najib Razak until weird hours at night.

In June, Syed Saddiq's officer Nurul Hidayah, had accused MACC for committing torturous acts and utter discriminatory remarks against her during interrogation. She was asked to stand on one leg for half an hour, MACC officer threw a handphone towards her and threatened to slap her.. They called her "Babi" and "Bodoh".

The problem lies at enormous power vested in the hand of MACC, which endowed by the article 30(3)(a) of MACC Act to interrogate a person, theoretically, indefinite periods of time. The article stipulates :

*30(3) A person to whom an order has been given under paragraph (1)(a) shall—*

*(a) attend in accordance with the terms of the order to be examined, and **shall continue to attend from day to day** where so directed until the examination is completed; and*

Teoh Beng Hock Trust for Democracy has been urging the government to amend the article to end unnecessary and prolonged interrogation, eliminate all form of psychological torture, respect detainees' right to rest and prevent reoccurrence of the tragedy of Teoh.

The MACC Act must comply with Lock-up Rules 1953 that all detainees be given rest time between 6pm and 6am. All enforcement officers including MACC officers must receive human rights education, whoever violated the rights of detainees shall be punished.

The government must take action to curb the abuse now.

**Ng Geok Chee**

**Chairperson**

**Teoh Beng Hock Trust for Democracy**