

CLOSING SPEECH BY YB DATUK LIEW VUI KEONG, JP
MINISTER OF LAW, PRIME MINISTER DEPARTMENT
AT THE TALK CUM FORUM HOSTED BY
THE COUNCIL FOR RESTORATIVE JUSTICE SABAH (CRJS)
AT THE ADVENA, 3RD FLOOR, GRANDIS HOTEL, KOTA KINABALU
ON FRIDAY, 08TH MARCH 2019

-Yang Berhormat Puan Jennifer Lasimbang

Assistant Minister of Education and Innovation, representing Yang Amat Berhormat Datuk Dr Yusof Bin Yacob, the Minister of Education and innovation

-Yang Arif Datuk Nurchaya Hj Arshad

Judge of the High Court of Sabah, representing Yang Amat Arif Datuk Seri Panglima David Wong Dak Wah, the Chief Justice of Sabah and Sarawak,

-Yang Berbahagia Datuk Hajjah Zaleha Rose Binti Datuk Haji Pandin
State Attorney General,

-Yang Berbahagia Encik Shahrul Rizal Majid

Representing Yang Berbahagia Datuk Duncan Sikodol, Sabah State Prosecution Director,

-Yang Berbahagia Encik Tan Boon Sing

Assistant Commissioner of Police Sabah, representing Yang Berbahagia Datuk Omar Mammah, Commissioner of Police Sabah,

-Yang Berbahagia Tuan Suria Hj Idris

Director of Sabah State Prisons,

-Yang Berbahagia Dr KH Tan
President of The Council for Restorative Justice Sabah,

-Yang Berbahagia Datuk Katherine Lee Mei Oi
Vice President 1 of the Council for Restorative Justice Sabah and
Organising Chairperson for this Talk cum Forum,

-Yang Berbahagia Datuk John Sikayun
Deputy President of the Council for Restorative Justice Sabah and Co-
Organising Chairperson for this Talk cum Forum,

Datuk- Datuk, Datin- Datin, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Good afternoon to all the distinguished guests, speakers and participants for this Talk cum Forum organised by The Council for Restorative Justice Sabah or CRJS in short. I apologise that I was not able to be here earlier. Despite that, I believe you have all benefitted from this Talk cum Forum.

It has been the government's concern to address acts of wrongdoings to ensure the safety and harmonious living of the people in this country. That said, we desire alternative ways to correct problems that occur within society and harsh punishment may not necessarily prove effective.

However, there are many areas to consider before arriving at the best form of correction for specific problems. The feelings and sentiments of the offender's family as well as impact on victims and society at large would certainly need to be taken into account. But it is important that whatever punishment is executed on the offender, it should bring repentance on the

offender who will promise himself or herself to never repeat the wrong ever again.

The government has all kinds of initiatives to assist the people to develop themselves economically, and simultaneously contribute to the development of the country, too. No one is left out in the development of this country. It is the government's belief that everyone has potential in something worthy. Everyone has a dream of something good. But not everyone realise what greatness they can do for themselves, for their family, for society and for the country.

It is always sad that most of the offenders have problems that they cannot fix, and so, they resort to committing acts against the law. Drug addicts say they became that way because of wrong influences and family neglect. A thief confesses that he was poor, that he couldn't sustain a job as he had to care for his children after his wife ran away and was desperate to feed his family. All these are true stories.

While the court is lenient to allow offenders to mitigate for a lesser punishment, the question is how effective is the punishment? Sure, a fine can increase the country's coffer. But can it change a wrongdoer? And an imprisonment will overcrowd the prisons with more inmates. It is my understanding that more than 50 percent of prisons in Malaysia are congested. There are 37 prisons and to build more prisons means we're not doing enough to address the root problem of the prison-overcrowding which is to prevent crime. Therefore, as the Minister in charge of Law, I will be honoured to study the results from this forum and present to the Cabinet on appropriate measures and corrections that the courts can mete out when finding an individual guilty of the charge brought against him or her.

In the meantime, we must not be tireless in spreading awareness on crime prevention. We also need to be considerate and become a caring society by accepting former offenders and assist them to a reformed and worthy life. That way, we play a part in ensuring former offenders do not repeat their mistakes.

I am glad that forums such as this is organised as it proves Malaysia does not lack loving and caring societies. I hope there will be more initiatives like this to help the government build a better nation. With that note, I officiate the closing of this forum.

Thank you.

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