

## **Two Acts to be amended to address insensitive comments such as 3R on social media**

By Dawn Chan - March 19, 2023 @ 4:52pm

KUALA LUMPUR: Two laws under the purview of the Communications and Digital Ministry will be amended to tackle insensitive comments on race, religion and the royal institution (3Rs).

Minister Fahmi Fadzil said the two laws are the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998 and the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission Act 1998.

Fahmi said it was high time to look into enhancing both Acts as no amendments had been made since it was enacted in 1998 and both were related.

"There are matters (within the Act) that we have to update and improve taking into account the current technology situation of today and its development which has rapidly changed since 1998.

"We do not only want to see (the review of) Section 233 of the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998 but we are in the process of evaluating the entire Acts.

"It does not only involve the issue of 3R. At the same time, the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission is monitoring issues, especially 3R, and will act based on the laws to ensure it is handled appropriately.

"I hope it will be brought to the Parliament latest by next year because I asked for a few matters to be looked into. It will take time but meanwhile, the Acts can continue to be enforced," he said after speaking at a forum titled "Youth Empowerment Through Digital Platforms" at the Youth Empowerment Fair 2023 here.

Fahmi said this when asked on the prevalence of provocative, race and religion baiting statements on social media, such as the ones involving the Mentega Terbang film case and Jom Ziarah Gereja issue.

He said he had, at the Dewan Rakyat, given his commitment to engage members of parliament (MPs) from both sides of the divide in the course of amending the Acts.

He said they want to embark on an engagement session in order to provide understanding and explanation as well as to gain feedback from the MPs.

Meanwhile, Fahmi said 97 per cent of populated areas in the country had access to internet and telecommunications while the rest, such as in Sabah and Sarawak, did not.

"Unfortunately, there are three per cent of areas that do not have the facilities. It involves several villages in the rural areas of Sabah and Sarawak, longhouses, Orang Asli posts and a number of islands.

"Maybe in terms of economy, it is not very efficient for telecommunication companies to provide services in these areas. We see broadband wireless and fixed wireless access as the best ways to provide services there while we explore fibre technology that is better and more efficient to arrive at those places," he said.

He added they were also looking into complaints from schools on the high cost of the satellite internet facility that was being used for the teaching and learning process.

Fahmi added that he and the ministry had contacted several satellite internet providers to see how the rural communities can be assisted to gain access to internet at a subsidised price or at a much lower price.

"For example, some have to spend RM10 for 1GB and this is costly. So we need to tackle this to ensure not only the access is ready but it is not too costly for the people there to use it," he said.