

MALAYSIA

'Not fair to say bosses will exploit foreign workers with six-month grace period'

MEF president refutes statement from North-South Initiative director who criticised govt's move

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Malaysian Employers Federation president Datuk Syed Hussain Syed Husman has said it is not right for any party to give the impression that employers will abuse foreign workers just because the government decided to grant employers a six-month grace period to comply with the labour laws, criticising a statement by human rights activist and the director of the North-South Initiative director Adrian Pereira. – ABDUL RAZAK LATIF/The Vibes pic, January 21, 2023

KUALA LUMPUR – The Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) has called out a statement that the six-month grace period granted by the government for employers to comply with labour laws will lead to abuses of foreign workers.

In a statement issued yesterday, MEF president Datuk Syed Hussain Syed Husman said it is not right for any party to give the impression that employers will abuse foreign workers just because the government decided to grant employers a six-month grace period to comply with the labour laws.

“We have some world-class employers and some great brands. Making statements that employers will abuse the foreign workers due to the six-month grace period to comply with labour laws is irresponsible and such a statement is not fair to the investors.”

“Malaysian employers are responsible and are doing their best to ensure their greatest assets, the employees, are taken care of,” said Syed Hussain in a statement issued yesterday.

This comes after human rights activist and the director of the North-South Initiative director Adrian Pereira asserted that giving employers a grace period of six months to comply with labour laws only after they have brought in migrant workers will open up risks of exploitation.

“If we are relaxing the criteria and compliance mechanism, naturally we’re going to put the workers at a higher risk,” he said as quoted by MalaysiaKini.

Syed Hussain also asserted that Malaysian businesses are trying their level best, especially coming out of the pandemic, to ensure that their employees are well taken cared of.

“Making a general statement that foreign workers will be abused does not help anyone. The government, employers and unions are all working together to make Malaysia better,” he said.

Previously, Home Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail said employers who bring in foreign workers under the new recruitment and quota plan will be given a grace period of six months to comply with the preconditions of hiring foreign workers.

This is to address severe manpower issues in several key economic sectors. – The Vibes, January 21, 2023