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Malaysia: Amendments to Sarawak Labour Ordinance up for submission to MoHR, says Gerawat

Saturday 22 July 2023, by [GARI Patricia](#) (Date first published: 9 July 2023).

KUCHING (July 9): Amendments to the Sarawak Labour Ordinance would be submitted to the Ministry of Human Resources (MoHR) upon the resolution of several provisions of the law set to be reached by this August, said Datuk Gerawat Gala.

According to the Deputy Minister in Sarawak Premier's Department (Labour, Immigration and Project Monitoring), the draft amendment to the Ordinance, which also includes amendments to the Employment Act as well as applicable provisions of the law on Minimum Housing Standards for workers, has been approved by the Sarawak Cabinet.

"Several rounds of meetings with the relevant stakeholders such as employee and employer representatives, industry organisations, relevant ministries and agencies, have been conducted to obtain their input and consensus to these amendments," he said in a statement today.

Gerawat said the items in the amendments included increased maternity leave from 60 days to 98 days; new provision for paternity leave of seven days; reduction of weekly working hours from 48 hours to 45 hours; and new provisions against sexual harassment.

He also listed a few provisions in the draft amendment that would require further discussions with the MoHR and the Federal Attorney General.

"We aim to reach a resolution on some of these provisions by early August and then, submit the draft amendment to the Ministry of Human Resources who will get the Federal Attorney General to prepare the Amendment Bill for tabling in Parliament," he said.

Gerawat's statement was issued in response to Sarawak Bank Employees Union (SBEU) chief executive officer Andrew Law's recent remarks about the union's call for the government to amend the Sarawak Labour Ordinance to be on par with the Employment Act 1955 applicable in Peninsular Malaysia.

Lo said this consideration was necessary, especially when a leading World Bank economist had stated that Sarawak was already considered a high-income state.

"It is a travesty when the workers in Kelantan, controlled by PAS for decades, can enjoy better benefits and protection than the workers in the high-income state of Sarawak," said the SBEU man.

Lo, who is also Sarawak's representative for the Labour Law Reform Coalition (LLRC), said the workers in Sarawak had been complaining about the state government's failure in ensuring that the Sarawak Labour Ordinance would be on par with the Employment Act.

“The lopsided legislations blatantly violated workers’ rights and the principle of non-discrimination,” said Lo.

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The Borneo Post

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