

**Business & Human Rights Resource Centre – Corporate Legal Accountability Project  
Interview with Roger Chan Weng Keng, 28 September 2016  
By Elodie Aba**



*Roger Chan Weng Keng is the former chairperson of the Malaysia Bar Council Human Rights Committee and current chairperson of the Malaysia Bar Council Constitutional Law Committee.*

**1. What are the main legal remedies or tools available to you in seeking to hold companies accountable for human rights abuses? What are the biggest gaps?**

One of the tools is to incorporate human rights principles as per all the international human rights conventions into domestic laws if this has not been done, so as to enable the courts to perform their role.

There is also the possibility of not supporting the purchase of companies' products if they result from human rights abuse.

The issue is that the biggest groups are not signing the international instruments and not enforcing them.

**2. What challenges (legal or practical) do you face in seeking to hold companies legally accountable in Malaysia? Do you think there has been any progress in this area in Malaysia?**

Many of the international human rights instruments are not executed by the government for the time being. There is also a lack of commitment to ensure the enforcement and recognition of these rights.

In Malaysia, the progress has been very very slow in fact. Many laws are passed but they are anti-human rights.

**3. What consequences or repercussions have you encountered as a result of your advocacy for human rights?**

I have encountered resistance from authorities (police, ministers and various government departments). And, of course, laws which do not protect and promote human rights.

**4. Do you ever collaborate with lawyers from other countries? If so, how?**

I collaborate with lawyers from other countries through conferences and workshops, as well as invitations to speak on particular subject matters that are human rights-related.

I also have discussions with lawyers and activists in other countries on an informal basis.

**5. What can the international community do to help?**

The international community can take cognizance and recognition of the human rights issues in my country, and take a strong stand with respect to any violation of basic rights of the individual as enshrined in the International Human Rights Instruments and the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.

**6. What would be your main message to the business community regarding accountability for human rights abuses?**

Businesses should ensure that their policies are human rights compliant and that they have an internal accountability test every year so as to ensure a minimum to zero rights violation.