

CEREMONY IN HONOUR OF THE APPOINTMENT OF THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE OF MALAYSIA
DATO' WAN AHMAD FARID BIN WAN SALLEH

6 AUGUST 2025

PALACE OF JUSTICE

ADDRESS BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

Yang Amat Arif, The Right Honourable Chief Justice, Yang Amat Arif, The Right Honourable The President of the Court of Appeal, Yang Amat Arif, The Right Honourable The Chief Judge of Malaya, Yang Amat Arif, The Right Honourable The Chief Judge of Sabah and Sarawak, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh,
Salam Sejahtera, and a very good afternoon.

1. In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, all praise is due to Allah (SWT), who has granted us His greatest blessing.

May peace and blessings be upon the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.), his family and his companions.

May it please Your Lordship,

2. It is truly an honor and privilege for me, as the Attorney General of Malaysia, to witness this ceremony honoring Your Lordship's appointment as the seventeenth Chief Justice of Malaysia.

3. Today, we gather to celebrate this profound trust and to honour Your Lordship, who, through years of exemplary service, unwavering dedication, and steadfast commitment to justice, has risen to this esteemed position. Your Lordship not only presides over the Federal Court but also provides visionary leadership to the entire judiciary, ensuring it remains an impartial, independent, and credible institution in the eyes of all.

4. This ceremony is more than a formal occasion. It is a celebration of the principles that bind the diverse people of Malaysia together: justice, fairness, equality before the law, and the aspiration towards a society where every individual can live with dignity and assurance.

It is a reflection of the trust placed in our judicial system and a reaffirmation of collective responsibility to uphold these principles.

5. As we welcome Your Lordship as our new Chief Justice, let us also renew our pledge to support and uphold the independence of the judiciary, ensuring that justice is served fairly and transparently for all.
6. I wish to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Your Lordship on this esteemed appointment. May Your Lordship's tenure be marked by wisdom, fairness, and unwavering commitment to the pursuit of justice. We look forward to Your Lordship's leadership in steering the judiciary towards greater heights and reinforcing the trust and confidence of the people in our judicial system.
7. In our constitutional democracy, the role of the judiciary is vital in safeguarding the constitution, protecting fundamental rights, and maintaining the harmony as well as the stability of our nation. The rule of law is embedded in the provisions of the Federal Constitution; it is a breathing principle that upholds equality before the law and the right to access the courts and be heard by independent judges under a fair process. The rule of law also seeks the government of

the day to respect the law, and no one is above the law. The former Lord President, His Royal Highness Sultan Azlan Shah, interpreted the rule of law as follows:

"The Rule of Law means literally what it says: the rule of the law. Taken in its broadest sense this means that people should obey the law and be ruled by it. But in political and legal theory it has come to be read in a narrow sense, that the government shall be ruled by the law and be subject to it.

The ideal of the Rule of Law in this sense is often expressed by the phrase 'government by law and not by men.'.

8. Our society is distinguished by its unique, multi-racial composition and rich diversity. Diverse public interests may lead to conflicting priorities. In such circumstances, the rule of law becomes essential in guiding conduct and maintaining harmony. Hence, judicial independence is a critical component of that rule. The judiciary plays a crucial role in ensuring that the executive and legislative branches operate within their constitutional limits, thereby maintaining a system of checks and balances. This role is integral to the doctrine of separation of powers, which serves to prevent the concentration of authority within a single branch of Government.'

9. The decision by Your Lordship to recuse yourself from hearing Datuk Seri Najib Razak's application to allow a Queen's Counsel to represent the former prime minister in his appeal against his conviction in the SRC International Sdn Bhd case marks a significant moment in affirming the independence of the judiciary in our country. We will not soon forget Your Lordship's powerful and principled words, and I quote:

“The public perception of the independence of the judiciary should not be put in doubt. It is not a matter of trial and error.”

And further:

“An independent judiciary is a precious gift to any society. Once it is lost, anarchy reigns.”

These words resonate deeply, and more importantly, this reflects a conscientious step taken to uphold judicial integrity and public confidence. It serves as a clear reminder to us all that justice must not only be done, but it must be seen to be done.

My Lord,

10. We live in a time where the demands on the justice system are evolving rapidly. The judiciary today does not operate in isolation. They operated within a dynamic legal environment influenced by global trends, technological advancements, and increasing public expectations. In this context, the judiciary must preserve the enduring principles of legal tradition while embracing innovation and reform where necessary.
11. The relationship between the judiciary and the Attorney General's Chambers (AGC) is one of mutual respect and shared responsibility. While we serve in different capacities within the legal system, we are united by a common purpose that is to uphold the law and serve the nation. The AGC has actively participated in judicial reforms aimed at enhancing judicial independence and improving efficiency, both crucial for sustaining public trust in the judiciary.¹
12. The AGC plays an integral part in the administration of justice, we are the officers of the court, not to secure convictions but to ensure that the rule of law is upheld, thereby contributing to the smooth

¹ Moving Forward Reshaping Judicial Reform – A Tripartite Synergy' [2022] 1 MLJ lxxx 24.

functioning of the criminal justice system. The AGC also defends the judiciary against unwarranted attacks and ensures the integrity of judicial processes, as demonstrated in cases where AGC acts to preserve judicial independence and uphold the administration of justice.²

13. Let me solemnly affirm that the AGC is fully committed to preserving, protecting, and defending our legal system. This dedication is demonstrated through commitments including supporting law reform initiatives that streamline litigation and promote fairness, as well as upholding the highest ethical standards in all related legal matters.
14. The AGC looks forward to working closely with the judiciary under Your Lordship's leadership to ensure that justice is administered in a manner that is both accessible and equitable. We are committed to collaborating constructively to improve judicial procedures and foster a litigation environment where expediency never compromises integrity, and accountability is embedded in every

² Messrs Tai Choi Yu & Co, Advocates (Suing as a Firm and Tai Choi Yu as sole proprietor) v Arifin bin Zakaria & Anor [2019] MLJU 532; [2020] 5 MLJ 207 and Haris Fathillah bin Mohamed Ibrahim & Ors v Tan Sri Dato' Sri Hj Azam bin Baki & Ors [2023] 2 MLJ 296.

decision. The entire force of the legal service stands to support Your Lordship in administering the law with integrity and compassion.

My Lord,

15. Allow me to conclude by quoting a verse from the Surah Al-Maidah, verse 8 of the Holy Quran:

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ظَاهَرَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمُنْكَرُ فَلَا يَحْرُمُونَ مَا عَلِمُوا
وَلَا يَأْخُذُونَ مِمَّا لَمْ يَعْلَمُوا
أَعْدِلُوا هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ وَأَنَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

O believers! Stand firm for Allah and bear true testimony. Do not let the hatred of a people lead you to injustice. Be just! That is closer to righteousness. And be mindful of Allah. Surely Allah is All-Aware of what you do.

(Al-Maidah:8)

16. On behalf of all gathered here, I extend our most sincere congratulations to Your Lordship. May you be continually guided by wisdom, fairness, and unwavering fortitude. May this appointment usher in a new chapter, one that strengthens our collective commitment to uphold the supremacy of the Constitution, preserve

the dignity of our courts, and fulfil the enduring promise of justice for everyone.

Much obliged.