The Equal Rights Trust (ERT) is an independent international organisation whose purpose is to combat discrimination and promote equality as a fundamental human right and a basic principle of social justice.

Tenaganita is a Malaysian non-governmental organisation protecting and promoting the rights of women, migrants and refugees. It was born out of the struggles of women workers in the plantations and industrial sectors for decent wages, decent living conditions and the end of discrimination and gender based-violence.

On 28 April 2012, thousands of people took to the streets of Kuala Lumpur in Bersih 3.0, the biggest mass opposition rally in Malaysia’s history. The protesters demanded “cleansing” of Malaysia’s electoral system, which favours the coalition that has been in power since Malaysia’s independence in 1957. Although this rally was violently suppressed, as were previous ones in recent years, the country lives in anticipation of change.

This report finds that the problems which the Bersih movement identifies with the political system are symptomatic of deep-rooted inequalities which limit people’s rights and aspirations in this Asian Tiger nation. The Bumiputera continue to benefit from decades-old affirmative action policies that have outlived their legitimacy. Discrimination based on religion is widespread and religious dissent is punished. LGBTI persons suffer criminalisation and persecution. Refugees and domestic workers are struggling for survival on the margins. This report is a comprehensive portrayal of discrimination and inequality in Malaysia and contains a set of recommendations aimed at ensuring equal rights for all.

This report has been prepared with the financial assistance of the European Union. The contents of this report are the sole responsibility of The Equal Rights Trust and Tenaganita and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.