

ADVOCATES' ASSOCIATION OF SARAWAK BINTULU BRANCH

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR YEAR 2024

(i) Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2023

AGM 2023 was held on 18th November, 2023. Agendas of meeting were followed and discussed. Notably, on the instruction on Central Committee, the draft amendment to the Constitution and draft amendment to the Inquiry Committee Rules were presented and discussed. Members present also agreed on the proposed increase of LONO fee from RM50.00 to RM150.00 for members and from RM200.00 to RM600.00 for non-members.

(ii) Farewell Dinner for YA DATUK DUNCAN SIKODOL

We co-hosted a farewell dinner with Mahkamah Bintulu for YA on 6th December, 2023 at Green Hotel. Ironically, it was the same hotel that we hosted Welcoming dinner for YA when he first arrived to report for duty. 26 members attended the dinner which includes our President, Mr. Gulvir Singh. A souvenir gift was presented to YA. I would like to thank Ms Rozy Tijan who was our Organizing Chairman for organizing the dinner successfully.

(iii) Annual Delegates Conference (ADC) 2024 } 3

ADC was held on 9th December, 2023 at Kuching. By virtue of our position, I (Chairman), Mr Janting Antalai (Secretary), Ms Hanizah Morni (Treasurer), Mr Eric Lau (Vice Chairman) will continue to be the Delegates for Bintulu Branch. All of us attended the ADC except for Ms Hanizah who has given her proxy to Mr Janting Antalai.

(iv) Opening Legal Year Sabah and Sarawak (OLY) 2024

OLY 2024 was held at Sabah International Convention Centre, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. on 19th January, 2024. This annual event was very much anticipated and about 18 members from our branch attended the event.

(v) Courtesy visit by committee members to YA Amelati Parnell

YA Amelati reported for duty as the Judicial Commissioner for High Court Bintulu on 1st March, 2024. The committee members took the opportunity to pay YA a courtesy visit on 25th April, 2024. 6 committee members attended and we had discussion with YA on High Court matters and on our practice here.

(vi) Sesi Libat Urus (Engagement) by Registrar of Society, Kuching

AAS Bintulu Branch has been issued with a show cause letter dated 13th March, 2024 by ROS, Kuching for failing to update the required records and information into e-ROS correctly and within the stipulated period since year 2012. The Registrar felt a need to conduct an engagement session with AAS committee members throughout Sarawak on this issue as the same issue had arisen or happened to all AAS branches. An engagement session was fixed on 30th April, 2024 in Kuching where 6 committee members from AAS Bintulu attended. With the briefing and explanation, the outstanding issue of our branch with ROS has been rectified.

(vii) Meeting with TYT Sarawak, Tun Dr. Haji Wan Junaidi bin Tuanku Jafar

An informal meeting was held by TYT at His Excellency's official residence on 1st May, 2024. As it was a last-minute meeting and due to limited seats, only myself and Vice Chairman, Mr Eric Lau attended. Being a legal practitioner before in Kuching, TYT expressed his concern on the issue surrounding the forming of Statutory Body for lawyers in Sarawak and hoped that it can be resolved soon. TYT will be able to assist once the draft Advocates Ordinance containing the forming of Statutory Body Sarawak is presented at the legislative level for passing process. The meeting was also attended by State Attorney General, Sarawak.

(viii) Welcoming Dinner for YA Amelati Parnell

We hosted a Welcoming Dinner for our new High Court Judge, YA Amelati Parnell on 10th May, 2024 at Golden Bay Hotel. 40 members attended. The dinner was also attended by our President, Mr. Gulvir Singh and our Immediate Past President, Mr Antonio Sim ~~President~~ from our side and Tuan Galvin Loo, Tn Leo Saga and Puan Salina Bahrom from the Mahkamah. The dinner was an enjoyable one and everyone had a good time, including YA Amelati. I would like to thank Miss Karen Ngu who was our Organizing Chairman for organizing the dinner successfully.

(ix) Townhall Meeting with CJSS

A Townhall meeting with CJSS was fixed on 21st June, 2024 in Kuching at Auditorium Bangunan Sultan Iskandar Simpang 3, Kuching. 6 committee members attended. Although the topic of the meeting was on *Legal Practice Challenges in Sarawak*, it did not take long for it to change into issue pertaining to formation of Statutory Body for lawyers in Sarawak, especially on the composition of its Executive or Office Bearers.

(x) Elevation Dinner for YA Amelati Parnell

We jointly organized an Elevation Dinner for High Court Judge, YA Amelati Parnell. YA Amelati Parnell was elevated to High Court Judge on 18th March, 2024. The dinner was held on 26th July, 2024 at NU ~~Bas~~ Hotel. 26 members attended. The dinner was also attended by our President, Mr. Gulvir Singh from our side and YA Wong Siong Tung from Sibu and Judicial Officers from Sabah and Sarawak. The dinner was again an enjoyable one and everyone had a good time, including YA Amelati who was accompanied by her husband. We presented a gift to YA Amelati on this special occasion. I would like to thank Ms Hanizah Morni for the dinner for organizing the dinner successfully.



(xi) Bar and Bench Games

The Bar and Bench Games had been held for the very first time between members of AAS Bintulu and staffs of Mahkamah Bintulu on 24th August, 2024. 5 games were held which were futsal, table tennis, badminton, pool and singing. To the surprise of many, as lawyers are not known to excel in sports, AAS Bintulu won 4 out of the 5 games held and emerged the overall champion. I am particularly proud of this result and has no qualm gulping down the fully filled "Winner Trophy Beer" during the dinner and prize presentation. I would like to thank all the members who have not only participated in the Games representing AAS Bintulu, but have also taken the competition seriously by having sufficient training individually and as a team before the Games to give our best shot. I would also like to thank our seniors, namely Ali Basah, Mary Ann and Edward Usa who took up the challenge as our representative in singing and pool competition. Kuddos to all. I would like to further thank the Minister of Tourism, Art and Culture and MP for Bintulu, YB Dato Sri Tiong King Sing for his office's financial sponsorship. Thanks again to Miss Karen Ngu for organizing the Games smoothly and successfully.

(xii) Issue on deposition of Will and its application

We received a letter dated 6th June, 2024 from District Office Bintulu notifying that the practice of District Office receiving the deposition of the original copy of Will all this while was wrong under the law. Hence, new Will shall no longer be deposited with their Office. We have further received a letter dated 11th September, 2024 from District Office Bintulu notifying that all previous Wills deposited shall be returned and law firms were to collect it from District Office Bintulu on 13th September, 2024.

We have actually written in on 10th June, 2024 requesting for a meeting to be fixed to hear us out on this issue and also on the issue faced by members on the process of application for Probate. Follow up on the fixing of the requested meeting had been made on 24.06.2024 and 26.07.2024 but it did not materialize. We subsequently wrote in on 12th September, 2024 expressing our concern on the correctness of their interpretation of the law and again stressed for a meeting to be held with us before a decision is made to return all previous Wills as we are the stakeholder.

With the assistance of committee member, Ms Angeline, an immediate meeting was able to be fixed with the District Officer himself on 13th September, 2024 and 5 committee members attended. The result of the meeting is satisfactory as District Officer agrees to continue to keep all the previous Wills but not new Wills. District Officer further concurs that in an application for Probate, the consent of Issues/Beneficiaries are not necessary.

(xiii) Branch Committee Meetings

We held 6 committee meetings this Year on 26.01.24, 05.03.24, 12.06.24, 14.08.24, 19.09.24 & 11.11.24.

(xiv) Opening Legal Year 2025 & National Symposium on Islamic Banking and Finance 2025

As you are all aware, Opening of Legal Year (OLY) for next year will be held in Kuching on 10.01.2025. Due to the refusal of AAS Kuching to co-organize the OLY, AAS Central has to step in and co-organized it with AAS Sibul and Mahkamah Kuching.

As with the practice of past OLY, National Symposium on Islamic Banking and Finance will be organized by AAS together with Association of Islamic Banking and Financial Institutions Malaysia (AIBIM) and AAS Central has decided to organize it together with OLY 2025. AAS Bintulu has been invited to co-organize it with AAS Central and we have accepted the task and are currently at the stage of preparation. The Symposium will be held on 11th - 12th January, 2025 in Kuching.

I call on all members to support and attend both of these events especially new lawyers. Participation from Bintulu members in these events are always high and I hope that it is to be maintained.

(xv) YBGK

The YBGK Program started in October 2024. We have about 10 junior lawyers on duty. They had given their pledges to undertake in the said program. As to date, 2 junior lawyers managed to complete their pledges. We are facing challenges especially from the Police Department i.e. the late delivering/presenting the suspect and copies of the Remand Application to our lawyers on duty. This matter has been communicated with the Investigating Officer. Further, verbal feedback has been obtained from both the Magistrates' Court Bintulu and the Investigation Officers which are positives towards our Program.

With that, I conclude my report.

Dated the 22nd November, 2024



Ma Seong Yuin