

## HUMAN RIGHTS WAKE 1998

The Malaysian Bar and HAKAM (National Human Rights Society of Malaysian) organised a Human Rights Wake in commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights on 11 December 1998 at the Bar Council auditorium.

A Wake was held in place of its 'Festival of Rights', as we have witnessed instances of gross injustices and blatant abuse of the fundamental liberties of our citizens during the last year.

Though scheduled to start at 7.30 in the evening, the crowd of nearly 300 were seen arriving as early as 6.30 p.m. which gave them enough time to have some food and drinks which were being sold. Human Rights Wake T-shirts were also being sold at a nominal price.

The evening started with a prologue by the Chairman of the Human Rights Committee, Mr. Cecil Rajendra followed by a presidential speech by Dato' Dr. Cyrus Das. Both in the prologue and presidential speech, mention was made on the launching of the Bar Council's Memorandum on the Repeal of Law Relating to Detention Without Trial. The President also said that the Memorandum had taken into consideration the views of the NGOs. A copy of the said Memorandum had been delivered to the Home Ministry a day earlier. There was also a presentation of the Malaysian Human Rights Fellowship 1998 made by Mr. Ramdas Tikamdas, President of HAKAM to Mr. Tian Chua, a prominent human rights activist. The said Memorandum was sold together with the Addendum during the Wake.

The performances for the evening included songs, dance, drama and poems by our local artistes including Mavin Khoo, Eddin Khoo, Rafique Rashid, Amir Yusoff and Instant Cafe Theatre. Our own members who had decided to let their hair down for the evening to show their hidden talents were Yeo Yang Poh, Sharmila Sekaran, Chacko Vadaketh and Cecil Rajendra. Comperes for the evening were Jerald Gomez and Leena Ghosh.

Three victims of recent Human Rights violations bore witness with personal testimonies, which touched the hearts of the audience.

When the evening came to an end with Amir Yusoff and Rafique Rashid's rousing rendition of 'Stand Up

For Your Rights', candles together with a candle coaster symbolic of the Wake were given out to each participant as they were leaving the Auditorium.



*Local artistes and some of our very own members performing that night..*



Most of the participants felt privileged to be a part of a Comperes for the nite memorable and moving evening.

Copies of the Memorandum together with the addendum are available at the Bar Council Secretariat at a nominal price of RM3.00. The Memorandum is available in English, Bahasa Melayu and Chinese.

### *The President's Opening Speech at the Human Rights Wake*

*"We celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR) today. It was proclaimed on December 10, 1948 in Paris. It was thus 50 years old yesterday.*

*I have used the word "celebrate" but that is incongruous because one does not celebrate "a wake". The organisers have called today's event "a wake" to*