



# Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

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## Press Statement

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### **CAP: War on the roads killed people**

Since the Israel invasion of Palestine in 2023, 23,000 people died. Within the same duration in Malaysia, 12,417 people lost their lives on our roads. With so many deaths and serious injuries, we may liken this situation to a war. In many instances, whole families have been wiped out, and yet most of us have remained largely insensitive, ignoring the sufferings of others. What are the agencies and policymakers doing? They have taken things too lightly, allowing the carnage to continue.

In the year 2022, the number of road accidents was 545,630 and last year it was 598,635. The number of fatalities grew from 6076 in 2022 to 12,417 last year.

Malaysia has recently been on the international radar for road safety after a study by FINN showed that the country had recorded 22.48 road deaths per 100,000 people, ranking it at third place, while Thailand took second place and Saudi Arabia was ranked first in road fatalities with 35.94 road deaths per 100,000 people in the list of countries where you are most likely to die on the road. In the list of countries ranked from most safe to most dangerous roads, Malaysia came in 23rd place out of 27 countries in the study.

Most vehicles are not designed safe and there is no way to know whether the tests done are sufficient. We also do not have a recall system for defective vehicles. Even such well-engineered cars suffered safety defects and had to be recalled recently by the millions overseas. Our locally manufactured cars need more stringent testing.

Speed, poor driving habits, attitude of motorists, congested roads, poor road conditions and lack of enforcement have contributed to accidents in Malaysia.

Risk-taking and bad behaviour, without concern for other road users, has become our culture. According to studies and police records, potholes are the highest cause of road fatalities after speeding and dangerous overtaking. They are even more dangerous in wet weather and at night when they are not clearly visible. 40% of fatalities were reported to have occurred on federal roads and more than 25% on state roads. The authorities should implement the 9 strategies recommended by the International Road Assessment Program (iRAP) which would provide a safe road environment. It is estimated that over 20 years, many lives could have been saved.

Many of our urban roads have been dug up by utility companies over and over again, damaging road foundations and never restored to their original condition. Heavy vehicles have done their part to cause further damage. Those responsible for this should be dealt with severely.

Though road safety is everyone's business the government has to take the lead in stirring our country out of this mess. The authorities have taken too long to study, plan, and implement necessary measures.

CAP urges policymakers and agencies to prioritize and give the highest possible attention to road safety and encourage public transport in the interest of reducing human suffering.

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