

Current fines on telcos for network issues insufficient, says Fomca

By **Mohamad Al As** - September 6, 2024 @ 7:58pm



This came after Digital Minister Gobind Singh Deo said the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) was reviewing the Communications and Multimedia Act to ensure service providers were held liable for network-related issues. - NSTP FILE PIC

KUALA LUMPUR: The current fines imposed on telecommunications companies are not enough to prompt meaningful improvements, the Federation of Malaysian Consumers Associations (Fomca) said.

The federation supported the government's proposal to introduce higher fines, which it believed would motivate companies to take consumer complaints more seriously and invest in better infrastructure.

"Higher fines should be structured to reflect the severity and frequency of network issues, ensuring that companies are held accountable for systemic problems," Fomca added.

This came after Digital Minister [Gobind Singh Deo](#) said the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) was reviewing the Communications and Multimedia Act to ensure service providers were held liable for network-related issues.

Fomca added that many Malaysians, both in rural and urban areas, faced a range of persistent problems, such as slow Internet speeds, frequent service disruptions and poor coverage.

These challenges, it said, significantly impacted daily life, especially as reliable digital connectivity was crucial for work, education and accessing essential services.

"Consumers deserve reliable and efficient network services. If providers fail to deliver, they should face the appropriate consequences."

Fomca called for independent monitoring to ensure transparency in assessing network performance, saying the assessments should not be influenced by the service providers.

It also called for the active involvement of consumer groups in the review of Communications and Multimedia Act.

Their participation, it said, was essential to ensure that any amendments reflected public concerns and needs.

The federation added that particular attention must be given to the voices of those in underserved rural areas, who often faced the most severe network challenges.

On the issue of data sharing between government agencies, Fomca expressed concern about potential breaches of consumer privacy.

While acknowledging the benefits of improved services, it said strict safeguards must be in place to protect personal data.

"(Consumers must be) informed and consent to any sharing of their data," Fomca said, adding that robust provisions were needed in the act to ensure data protection and privacy.

The federation said there was a need for continuous improvement in cybersecurity and data protection.

While the government had made progress, the group said, government personnel must undergo regular training and certification, and there must be stricter enforcement of cybersecurity protocols.

As digital infrastructure becomes increasingly integral to daily life, Fomca said, these steps were crucial for safeguarding consumers from evolving threats.