

Online Gambling in Malaysia: A Legal Analysis

Guru Dhillon, Lee Sook Ling, Maran Nandan, and Jason Tze-Xi Nathan*

Faculty of Law, Multimedia University, 75450 Bukit Beruang, Melaka, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

Gambling is a serious issue that comes with wide-reaching social, political, and economic consequences if not tightly monitored by governmental authorities. The advent of technology has provided gambling operators a virtual platform that caters to gamblers over the internet. Malaysian legislation that deals with gambling was drafted before online gambling came about. Malaysia has yet to introduce any amendment to existing legislation to better equip it with sufficiently clear wording and provisions for the purpose of regulating online gambling. The aims of this article are to (1) examine the prevalence of online gambling in Malaysia today and (2) analyze the application of existing legislation to regulate online gambling. In this article, the above aims are analysed from a legal perspective based on a qualitative doctrinal research method involving journal articles, relevant news articles, and Malaysian legislation. The finding of this article establishes that unregulated online gambling is growing into a pressing issue in Malaysia and relevant local legislation needs to be updated to better deal with its challenges. This article is not

meant to be an all-encompassing thesis but to serve as an introductory guide into this niche area of the law.

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E-mail addresses:

guru.dhillon@mmu.edu.my (Guru Dhillon)

sllee@mmu.edu.my (Lee Sook Ling)

maran.nandan@mmu.edu.my (Maran Nandan)

jasonn321@gmail.com (Jason Tze-Xi Nathan)

*Corresponding author

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INTRODUCTION

Malaysia's diverse demographics bring with it various challenges that stem from

its unavoidable differences. The varying beliefs and sensitivities of different communities must be taken into account in order to maintain national harmony. This is especially so when the effects of our differences spill over into the sphere of public policy. Gambling, or more accurately the right to gamble freely, is one of those divisive issues albeit a less incendiary one compared to other racial and religious issues that one would come across in Malaysia.

While Malaysia is ethnically a very diverse nation, 61.3% of the Malaysian population are Muslims (Department of Statistics Malaysia [DOSM], 2010). Malaysia is unique in the sense where it has a dual judicial system with Muslims having their own separate court system for certain areas of law as per Article 121(1A) of the Federal Constitution. Islamic Shariah law is enforceable on Muslims for certain kinds of offence. Gambling is illegal and punishable under the Islamic Shariah law if a Muslim devotee is implicated in the activity or has harboured money gained through gambling activities (Loo & Phua, 2016). This makes the issue of regulating gambling or betting socially, and consequently legally, complicated.

Yet despite that gambling in itself has had a long history in Malaysia from as early as the "...19th century when the Chinese traders and seamen came to Malaya" (Dhillon & Miin, 2013). Today Malaysia has several avenues of legalized gambling including sports betting by several legalized companies and a spectacular mountain top

casino in the form of Genting Highlands. However, these are the few and only legal avenues of gambling in Malaysia.

The advancement of technology over the years has disrupted the way many industries traditionally work. The advent of the Internet age has certainly transformed many industries although not all of the industries would be deemed as "good" in the eyes of the public. A new dimension has been added to the gambling industry in the form of online gambling and betting. One cannot say for sure if that is a good thing for society but it has turned into a multibillion-dollar industry. The non-casino gambling industry in Malaysia alone has been estimated to be worth US\$2.99 billion (Berthelsen, 2013). Hence steps must be taken to ensure that the legislative framework is up to date to deal with this new situation.

Moving forward, this article aims to examine the prevalence of online gambling in Malaysia today and analyse the application of existing legislation to regulate online gambling. Accordingly, the article will begin with the examination of the prevalence of online gambling in Malaysia with reference to relevant statistics and reports. The article will then continue with an analysis of the Malaysian legislative framework and the application of existing legislation to regulate online gambling including the Betting Act (1953), Communications and Multimedia Act (CMA, 1998), Contracts Act (1950), Common Gaming Houses Act (CGHA, 1953), and Prevention of Crime Act (POCA, 1959).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A qualitative doctrinal research method was employed. Materials were sourced from both legal and non-legal sources including but not limited to scholarly research journals, reports, Malaysian legislation, and relevant news articles. A doctrinal analysis of relevant Malaysian legislation was conducted in tandem with a qualitative analysis of online gambling in Malaysia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Prevalence of Online Gambling in Malaysia

The nature of online gambling is such that the gambling services offered by an operator operating outside of Malaysia on an online platform that is accessible to anyone in Malaysia with an internet connection if it was not blocked by the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC). Online gambling has been accessible to the world since its origins in Antigua and Barbuda which allowed licensed online casinos to operate in 1994 (Duncan, 2015).

Global online gambling wagers are projected to reach USD 950 billion by 2021 (Juniper Research, 2016). In recent years the issue of online gambling in Malaysia has started to become a cause for concern for authorities due to a spike in the number of illegal operators run by foreign and local syndicates that have set up operation centres across Malaysia. This situation has led to numerous crackdown operations by the police to contain this problem.

Malaysian authorities are combating several forms of online gambling as follows:

- a. online gambling operators both local and foreign that offer their services on a website and local Malaysians patronize the said services;
- b. online gambling syndicates that base their operations in Malaysia but target gamblers out of Malaysia;
- c. traditional gambling operators that still operate and accept customers into their physical premises but transfer the actual gambling process to a virtual platform by providing their customer's tablets and mobile phones topped up with credit under one WiFi signal instead of traditional gambling cards and boards.

Law enforcers face difficulty in tracing their operations as they are not confined to a fixed premise. The operators can easily operate out of any premise since only mobile devices are used ("Illegal gambling", 2018).

Malaysian police generally focus their efforts on catching the illegal operators, syndicates, and people helping the syndicate instead of the gambler although there are instances where the gambler is caught and prosecuted.

In the first half of 2019 alone, police had seized RM3.8 million in cash, arrested 14,759 individuals, and seized 10,361 pieces of equipment in various raids launched against illegal gambling including online gambling. From these raids, the police identified up to 37 syndicates involved in online gambling (Bernama, 2019).

Bukit Aman Criminal Investigation Department director Datuk Huzir Mohamed in a press statement stated that the police are also working with the local authorities and the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) to cut off utility services and block gambling websites. MCMC has also been requested to block 1,270 websites determined to be advertising gambling activities. Telecommunication operators such as Celcom, Telekom Malaysia, UMobile, Maxis, and Digi are reported to also be cooperating with enforcement authorities to halt unsolicited gambling-related messages (Bernama, 2019).

Besides that, the police have also warned that owners and tenants discovered to have given permission for gambling activities to be carried out within their premises will face legal repercussions (Bernama, 2019). Datuk Huzir stated in the same press conference that those found to be involved would "... face action under Section 4(1)(a), Section 4(1)(b), Section 4(1)(c) dan Section 4(1)(g) of the CGHA (1953)."

In the course of the crackdown, police have identified international gambling syndicates run by Chinese and Indonesian nationals, who have chosen Malaysia as a hub for these operations (Ramendran, 2019). A large number of these reported cases involved Chinese nationals and this problem was so rampant that the Chinese Embassy had to post a notice on its website advising Chinese citizens to obey local laws and urged anyone who had inadvertently become involved in fraud or online gambling

syndicates in Malaysia to get in touch with the police (Chew, 2019).

The recent Covid-19 pandemic has not stopped these syndicates from carrying out their illegal operations either. On 22 April 2020, the police raided an online gambling syndicate in Ukay Heights, Ampang, with the arrests of 25 Chinese nationals. They were from the Jianxi and Guizhou districts and found to be promoting illegal gambling through online messaging applications to gamblers in China. They were also suspected of coordinating online gambling games (Bernama, 2020).

The news articles above clearly demonstrate that the vice of online gambling is a present and real problem to be dealt with by the relevant authorities. As the vice of online gambling grows in Malaysia, it will naturally pose new problems that traditional gambling legislation does not provide for. The legislation currently employed to deal with these new problems posed by online gambling will be further discussed in the next section.

Legislative Framework of Online Gambling in Malaysia

In order for a country to effectively tackle an issue like online gambling, a two-prong approach must be adopted. The first prong is comprehensive legislation that effectively covers all aspects of the issue. Legally speaking, any form of a criminal offence can only be deemed so if it is first categorized under existing legislation as a crime. A crime is an activity that is against the laws of a nation (Ishak & Bani, 2017). It is an action

or omission which constitutes an offence and is punishable by law. For example, the Penal Code codifies a whole list of actions and omissions which are deemed as punishable offences under the law.

The second prong would be effective enforcement of the legislation. One can legislate as many good and commendable laws as possible but it will all be for naught without there being reliable enforcement agencies and mechanisms in place to prevent offences and punish offenders (Andrews, 1909). However, for the purpose of this article, only the legal aspect will be examined as the focus of this article is on the existing legislation and its weakness.

Existing Legislation

As previously mentioned, under our country's unique dual legal system as laid out in the Federal Constitution, Shariah law which is applicable for Muslims forbids any form of gambling for Muslims. This means that gambling of any form is already illegal for the majority of the citizens since Muslims make up roughly 60% of the population (Zakaria et al., 2018).

As for the non-Muslims, gambling with a licensed operator is permitted. Section 27A of the CGHA (1953), states that the Minister of Finance may authorize a validly registered Malaysian company to promote and organize gaming. A company that is not licensed to promote and organize gaming as per the above provision but still provides gaming or gambling services is essentially an illegal gambling operator and will be liable for the full brunt of the law. The same

goes for gamblers who patronize illegal gambling services.

There is a whole slew of legislation that regulates various forms of legal and licensed gambling. Among the legislation that regulates gambling in Malaysia are:

1. Betting Act (1953)
2. CGHA (1953)
3. Lotteries Act (1952)
4. Pool Betting Act (1967)
5. Racing Club (Public Sweepstakes) Act (1965)

These legislations are standalone statutes that deal with various forms of gambling. Apart from these Acts, there are also other pieces of legislation which is utilized by enforcement agencies in apprehending individuals dealing with illegal gambling including online gambling such as the POCA (1959). As can be observed, while we have several standalone pieces of legislation that regulate different forms of gambling activities, Malaysia does not have a standalone Act to deal with the issue of online gambling. This would not be an issue if the above mention legislation were self-equipped with provisions and wordings that granted it the power to regulate online forms of gambling. Unfortunately, that is not the case.

A cursory look at the years in which these Acts were promulgated clearly shows that its provisions were drafted in an era in which no one could anticipate the coming novelty known as the internet, let alone anticipate the challenges that would come with it in the form of online gambling. The issue of updating existing legislation has

been raised up multiple times in the past with promises of an amendment to better deal with the issue of online gambling.

Then Home Minister (and current Prime Minister) Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin mentioned during the course of the debate in the Dewan Rakyat on 9 July 2019 that the government intended to amend gambling laws to include provisions which dealt with online gambling as “They need updating because, at that time, there was no online gambling.” He also noted that countries like Singapore had standalone legislation to deal with online gambling (Kaur, 2019).

However, this intention to introduce appropriate amendments has been around since early 2017, when it was reported that then Deputy Prime Minister Zahid Hamidi made an announcement informing the public that the amendment to the CGHA (1953) had been drafted and submitted to the Attorney Generals Chambers. It was also communicated that the amendment would be tabled at the next Parliament session (Bernama, 2017). Unfortunately, the proposed amendment has yet to see the light of day. In the meantime, enforcement agencies continue to use the existing legislation to combat the vice of illegal online gambling.

Common Gaming Houses Act 1953

The CGHA (1953) is frequently relied upon by Malaysian authorities to combat illegal online gambling in Malaysia. The CGHA 1953 has multiple provisions which target the operators of illegal gaming houses and this fits the approach of Malaysian

authorities in focusing their efforts on taking down the syndicates as opposed to going after the gambler which is much harder to track. The CGHA 1953 also has provisions that cover the gambler and parties which assist the syndicates hence making it a rather comprehensive piece of legislation save the lack of specific provision expressly specifying online gambling.

Former Deputy Home Minister Datuk Mohd Azis bin Jamman in a reply to YB Nurul Izzah during the parliamentary debate on 12 November 2019 stated that Tenaga Nasional Berhad (TNB) had, in accordance with Section 21A of the CGHA 1953, cut power supply to 9 premises located in Penang believed to be used as gambling hubs (Dewan Rakyat, 2019). This is an example of how comprehensive the CGHA 1953 is in its coverage.

While it is comprehensive in coverage, the key provision in the CGHA 1953 is Section 4. Bukit Aman Criminal Investigations Department director Datuk Huzir Mohamed in a press conference after a nationwide crackdown on gambling syndicates, including 37 online gambling syndicates, on 24 June 2019 informed the public in a press conference that owners and tenants found to have allowed their premises to be used for gambling activities would not be spared from police action. “Those found to be involved will face action under Section 4(1)(a), Section 4(1)(b), Section 4(1)(c), and Section 4(1)(g) of the CGHA (1953),” he said (Bernama, 2019).

Now to examine some of the provisions as mentioned by the police to be applicable.

Section 4(1)(a) -(g) of the CGHA 1953 provides that if a person who is the owner of a premise or manages the premise which is being run as a common gaming house is liable for an offence.

The provisions of the CGHA 1953 clearly intend to target operations of gambling syndicates in physical locations. While the act of gambling is online, operators of the syndicate need to operate from a physical location to keep the website of the “online casino” up and running. Hence, enforcement agencies can rely on these provisions to catch online gambling operators of all forms. Section 4(1)(b) of the CGHA 1953 goes one step further to rope in the people owning the physical locations of such operations as offenders.

Lately, there has been a noticeable shift in the modus operandi of illegal gambling operations. Local police have reported them going high tech with their go-to mode of operation involving the use of smartphones and tablets. According to Kuala Lumpur City police chief Commissioner Datuk Seri Mazlan Lazim: “A representative from the syndicate will distribute tablets which are topped up with credit. The whole gambling process will be under one WIFI signal and mostly portable WIFI. These syndicates have a lot of applications to gambling and at the end of the day, players pay in cash or via online transaction should they lose in a game.” According to him, culprits could also be arrested and prosecuted under Section 4B(a) and Section 6(1) of the CGHA 1953 (“Illegal Gambling”, 2018). From this article, it is clear that Section 4B and

Section 6(1) of the CGHA 1953 is deemed applicable against online gamblers who patronize the services of online gambling operators.

Section 4B of the CGHA 1953 provides the punishment of a fine or imprisonment for any person found guilty of committing an offence by transacting or dealing with a gaming machine of any form in any manner. Section 6 (1) of the CGHA 1953 on the other hand also provides the punishment of fine or imprisonment to persons found guilty of patronising a common gaming house as defined by the CGHA 1953.

While these provisions are clearly applicable to gamblers who patronize gambling operations with a physical location but carry out the actual gambling online as described in the earlier statement by Dato Seri Mazlan Lazim, it is unclear whether this provision can be deemed to be applicable to online gamblers who do not gamble in a physical gaming house. If we delve further into the CGHA 1953, the wordings of the relevant provisions are wide enough to be reasonably interpreted as applicable to online gamblers who are not physically in the gaming house.

The wording of Section 4B of CGHA 1953 has anyone who deals or transacts with gaming machines guilty of an offence, Section 2 of the CGHA 1953 defines gaming machine as:

“any mechanical, electrical or electronic machine or device (including any computer program used in such machine or device),”

This device is designed or adapted in such a way that the device can be used for playing a game of pure chance or chance and skill for winnings of monetary value.

The definition of the gaming machine according to Section 2 of the CGHA 1953 is so broad and encompassing that it can arguably be interpreted to include privately owned mobile phones that have been used by gamblers to gamble online even without being present in a common gaming house and hence be liable for an offence under Section 4B of the CGHA 1953.

Unfortunately, other wordings and definitions provided within the CGHA 1953 still operate with an implied understanding or notion that gambling can only occur in a physical premise. For example, Section 2 of the CGHA 1953 provides the definition of “common gaming house” as “...any place...”, of which all or certain members of the public have access for the specific purpose of gambling including various forms of gaming and lottery. While the provisions provide for various forms of gambling activity that may be conducted in the place and various possible methods of dealing with the premise, the key term in the definition of “common gaming house” is “any place”. The term “any place” is used repeatedly throughout the lengthy definition.

A strict interpretation of the usage of the word “place” might run the risk of confining the reaches of the CGHA 1953 to a brick-and-mortar setting. Yet with the rise of online gambling, an online gambling website that hosts such forms of gaming in online gaming rooms, chatrooms, or

pages can arguably be said to fulfil all the conditions used to define a “common gaming house” as listed above except for the need of a physical premise (Dhillon & Miin, 2013).

Despite the potential difficulties put in place by the terminology of CGHA 1953, there have been encouraging signs of progressive application of the CGHA 1953 by enforcement authorities. On 2 October 2020, in what is believed to be the first such case in Malaysia, police raided the premises of a software development company for allegedly creating, selling, and maintaining online gambling applications for consumers in foreign countries (Camoens, 2020). The police stated that the case would be investigated under the 4(1)(g) CGHA (1953) and the Computer Crimes Act 1997. In a follow-up raid on 30 October 2020, the suspects were rearrested under the POCA (1959) (Zack, 2020). This is an encouraging step in the right direction as the role of other non-traditional gambling-related parties like software developers is being recognised as crucial to online gambling operations. However, this also shows the weakness of existing gambling regulations like the CGHA 1953 as the police had to end up relying on POCA (1959).

Betting Act 1953

The Betting Act 1953 (BA 1953) is another important piece of legislation that deals with gambling, specifically with betting. The police rely upon provisions within the BA 1953 to deal with all forms of betting including online betting. An online gambling

business that doubled as a call center was raided in Kluang, Johor on 9 January 2020. According to police, the syndicate's modus operandi was to conduct and promote online gambling from two residential properties by attracting Chinese nationals into gambling. The suspects were remanded and the case was investigated under Section 4 (1) (c) of the BA 1953 (Tan, 2020).

Section 4(c) of the BA 1953 provides that any person who cares or manages a place purposed to function as a common betting house or betting information centre will be liable to a fine and imprisonment upon conviction. The interpretation of this provision should be combined with a reading of the definition of "betting information centre" in Section 2(1) of the BA 1953 which is loosely worded and could be widely interpreted to outlaw online gambling (Zakaria et al., 2018).

However, the potential obstacle posed by the BA 1953 for its utilization in enforcement against online gambling is the same as that of the CGHA 1953, namely the wordings of the legislation invites the interpretation that the legislation is only applicable in circumstances in which a physical premise is abused for the purposes of illegal betting.

For example, Section 2(1) of the BA 1953 defines the term "common betting house" as "...any place..." which was kept or used for the purpose of betting or receiving bets in either cash or credit, by way of telephone, post or telegram, on an event or contingency of event of which the general public has access to.

The word "place" on the other hand is defined as: -

"...any house, office, room or building, and any place or spot, whether open or enclosed, and includes a ship, boat or other vessel whether afloat or not, and any vehicle;"

Once again, the usage and definition of the word "place" in the BA 1953 would raise troubling questions on the applicability of the provisions of this piece of legislation meant to regulate betting in Malaysia onto online betting which is seemingly not caught by the definition of the word "place" which alludes to a strictly physical premise as can be deduced from its definition in Section 2 of the BA 1953.

On the other hand, the word "access" is also defined in Section 2 of the same legislation and includes access by way of telephone. While telephone betting is a different form of betting from online betting, Pan Malaysia Pools Bhd which initially started a telephone betting service after receiving a telephone betting licence has successfully transitioned that service to a mobile app through a service called dmcGO for bettors to place bets over the mobile app via the internet. This would be considered a legal form of online betting and it would seem that this is a gateway for online betting and gambling (Goh, 2017).

Prevention of Crime Act 1959

The POCA (1959) is not a gambling-specific piece of legislation. In fact, the description of the POCA (1959) begins as

follows: “An Act to provide for the more effectual prevention of crime throughout Malaysia and for the control of criminals, members of secret societies, terrorists and other undesirable persons, and for matters incidental thereto.” While not solely geared towards regulating gambling, the POCA (1959) has key provisions which provide for enforcement against illegal gambling operations and hence by extension, illegal online gambling operations.

In 2016, Selangor police issued a stern warning to all owners of online gambling centres in the state to close down their operations or face action under the POCA (1959) (Bernama, 2016). Former Deputy Home Minister Datuk Mohd Azis bin Jamman in a reply to YB Nurul Izzah during the parliamentary debate on 12 November 2019 informed Parliament that between 2017 and 2019, the action was taken against as many as 28 people under POCA (1959) for the crime of online gambling (Dewan Rakyat, 2019).

In the first half of 2018 alone, police reported that 25 suspects were detained without trial under the POCA (1959). Local police while lamenting about the difficulty in apprehending culprits due to the mobile nature of this vice, said that stern actions will be taken against both operators and customers. Culprits that were caught could be prosecuted under Section 4B(a) and Section 6(1) of the CGHA 1953 (Bernama, 2018).

In addition to online gambling operators and online gamblers, police have also warned that people who assist online

gambling operators in any way, rent to online gambling syndicates or have knowledge of this vice but do not report to the police, can be implicated under POCA (1959) and be detained for up to two years without trial with the possibility of extension should it be deemed necessary. According to Bukit Aman Anti-Vice, Gambling and Secret Societies Division principal assistant director Senior Assistant Commissioner Datuk Rohaimi Md Isa, in 2019 alone, 350 culprits involved in online gambling were dealt with under provisions in POCA 1959 (“Property owners”, 2020). Key provisions within POCA (1959) that are relevant to the issue of illegal online gambling are Section 3, 7(b), 19A (1), and Schedule 1(5).

Part 1(5) of the First Schedule list expressly refers to persons who are concerned with the organization and promotion of illegal gaming as part of the Registrable Categories in the POCA (1959). This widely worded provision would rightly include illegal online gambling syndicates and, if liberally interpreted, all persons involved in assisting these illegal syndicates.

Section 3 provides that a person may be arrested without a warrant by the police they have reason to believe that the person may be held under justifiable grounds under the ambit of POCA (1959). This is a controversial provision within the Act that provides for arrest without a warrant provided that the police believe that there is reason to believe that an individual is involved with applicable illegal activities including illegal online gambling as laid out in Schedule 1 of the POCA (1959).

Section 7(b) goes on to allow the police to detain one for up to 60 days if the police believe they have reason to do so. Even more draconian than Section 7(b) is Section 19A. (1) where at the end of the 60-day detention as provided for in Section 7(b), the Prevention of Crime Board has the option of subjecting the culprit to a 2-year detention that may be renewed indefinitely for 2 years each time with no number of times the detention may be renewed.

While the arbitrary detention is draconian, to say the least, it is important to note for the purpose of this article that apart from the syndicates, individuals suspected of assisting, renting to, or frequenting illegal online gambling operations may be dealt with under the provisions of the POCA (1959) and potentially be detained for an indefinite period of time.

Communications and Multimedia Act 1998

Another important but non-gambling specific piece of legislation is the CMA (1998) which plays an important role in the efforts to clamp down on online gambling as its provisions empower the Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) to block the websites used as a platform for online gambling and also advertisement of online gambling platforms.

One of the main problems that the police face today in dealing with illegal online gambling is that the server is not located in Malaysia but overseas. Hence local police

rely on the Ministry of Communications and MCMC to block IP addresses which serves as a platform for online gambling. However, these gambling operators easily overcome this problem by switching their IP address and they can be readily accessed by Malaysians again until MCMC takes note and blocks the new IP address (Dewan Rakyat, 2019).

Besides blocking online gambling websites, the MCMC also has been working to clamp down on spam Short Messaging Services (SMS) promoting gambling activities including online gambling. In the second half of 2019 alone, MCMC directed telecommunications corporations to end the services of over 5,800 numbers promoting gambling-related activities (Noor, 2019). Such usage of network facilities is an offence under Section 233 of the CMA 1998 which states that anyone who creates and initiates the transmission of any communication which is false with the intention to annoy or harass another person commits an offence and carries a maximum fine of RM50,000 or jail term of 1 year or both.

On the other hand, Section 263(2) of the CMA 1998 directs licensees to assist the MCMC or other authorities as far as reasonably necessary to enforce national laws. This provision clearly states that a licensee shall assist the MCMC in enforcing the law upon written request. In the case of online gambling, MCMC has been using its power to ensure that Internet Service Providers (ISP's) assist them in the blocking of such websites.

Contracts Act 1950

Besides those Acts, a notable piece of legislation relevant to the present issue will be the Malaysian Contracts Act (1950) which stipulates in Section 31(1) that:

“Agreements by way of wager are void; and no suit shall be brought for recovering anything alleged to be won on any wager, or entrusted to any person to abide the result of any game or other uncertain event on which any wager is made.”

The above section is general in its scope and wide-ranging enough to include online betting as it is still a form of wager. The consequence of the above provision onto the online betting scene will be that local bettors will have no remedy to recover their bets should the company or syndicate in which they gambled with decide not to pay the winners. While not specifically meant to target online gambling, this provision may serve as a deterrent to potential patrons of online gambling operations.

CONCLUSION

The key findings of this study are that (1) online gambling activities are becoming increasingly widespread in Malaysia and (2) existing legislation is in need of reforms to better regulate online gambling. The lack of reported cases despite the increasing prevalence of online gambling in the day-to-day life of a Malaysian and increasing number of newsflashes about Malaysian authorities cracking down on illegal online betting operators is an interesting situation

that could be caused by a myriad of reasons. However, at the end of the day, one cannot run away from the painfully obvious conclusion that our laws pertaining to gambling and betting are archaic in form and substance with a dire need for a proper review to update and bring it up to speed with the current demands that come along with the internet era.

The online betting industry has brought with it new challenges and headaches to regulators and enforcement agencies across the world as they seek to find lasting and impactful solutions. At the same time on the local front, relevant agencies and authorities must not shirk from their duty to step up and ensure that this issue is tackled before it gets out of hand.

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