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`Settle backlog of divorce cases wisely'

A WANITA representative urged the authorities to use their wisdom and compassion to settle the backlog of divorce cases as it has created hardship for Muslim women.

Pahang representative Hamiah Khatib Awang said the slow process had, in many instances, left many women digantung tak bertali (high and dry).

She said many Muslim women encountered problems in getting help from the religious department and syariah courts.

She said a common complaint of divorced women was getting their husbands to pay maintenance.

"Please have compassion for them. Many of them were left on their own to weather emotional storm which came with the break-up of their families. As the process is slow, many single mothers also cannot marry other men."

Hamiah was debating the motion of thanks for the presidential address.

To overcome the problems, she said, there should be more allocations to employ more religious officials.

She said the time had come to exert political will to give better protection to women and children and to see justice served for single mothers.

Hamiah also proposed to the Information Ministry to broadcast the president's speech on television at prime time to give the public a clear picture on the events leading to the dismissal of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim from the party and Cabinet.

She said this was crucial as the speech had successfully countered all allegations against the Government, party and Dr Mahathir himself.

She added that as the speech was long, it should be broadcast in series.

"I call upon my hero (Information Minister Tan Sri Mohd Khalil Yaakob) to look into this."

Hamiah also hit out at head of Pas consultative council Datuk Nik Aziz Nik Mat for denying women their role in the society.

Hamiah urged vice-president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who was Home Minister, to exert his power and ban Pas' official newspaper, Harakah, as it had been used to mislead the people.

She added that despite repeated warnings, Harakah was still being sold to non-members.

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