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Shahrizat-Apathy

GROWING APATHY IN SOCIETY VERY DISTURBING, SAYS SHAHRIZAT

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 16 (Bernama) -- Women and Family Development Minister Datuk Shahrizat Jalil said growing apathy among Malaysians is a disservice to community efforts to check rampant rape-cum-murder cases.

She said society's could-not-be-bothered attitude and its inclination to only let the authorities take care of social problems was a disturbing trend.

"Unlike the community's caring nature in the past, society's sense of care and concern today is diminishing", she said commenting on the rape and murder of a student in Tapah yesterday.

The semi-nude body of Farah Deeba Rustam was found in a drain in Kampung Tersusun Jalan Bidor Lama at 6pm. The 17-year student of Sekolah Menengah Buyung Adil, Tapah, had stab wounds and bruises.

Speaking to Bernama, Shahrizat said it was time that Malaysians show determination not to let apathy towards rape and murder of women to characterise their society.

On Oct 7 last year, computer engineer Noor Suzaily Mukhtar, 24, was murdered after being raped and sodomised in a bus while on the way to work in Klang.

Her nude body was dumped at a housing project in Bukit Tinggi there.

The nation had another shocker a fortnight later when the body of six-year old Nor Shuhada Borak was found in a water tank atop a town house in Selayang, also after being raped and sodomised.

Shahrizat blamed society's apathy on the public's preoccupation with minding their own business and the people's fear of being labelled as busy-bodies.

"To an extent we have to bother about our neighbours and show concern when they need help. It is unbecoming of society to ignore accident victims requiring assistance, for instance," she said.

Shahrizat said: "There is no point in drafting legislations, in imposing stiffer penalties... if today's society does not change its attitude. Crimes will persist all the same."

Expressing disgust over the crime committed against the Tapah girl yesterday and extending her sympathy for the tragedy, Shahrizat urged residents there to help the police bring the offender or offenders to justice.

On another matter, Shahrizat said that her ministry got the new name today to signify its comprehensive jurisdiction over family development and not confined to women's affairs only.

"It directly covers the fathers as well as they are responsible for the family and as such should also be involved in ensuring the ministry's comprehensive responsibility," she said.

Last Jan 17, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad promoted Shahrizat to full minister to take charge of a new ministry to handle women's affairs.

Prior to that she was a deputy minister in the PM's Department.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet, Constitution and Inter-governmental division of the PM's Department today announced the name change for Shahrizat's ministry, which among other things handles the Women's Affairs Department and the Population and Family Development Board.

-- BERNAMA

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