

**Minister: Gov't to broaden rape definition**  
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After nearly a week of outcry over the acquittal in the controversial rape case in Sibul, Women's Minister Rohani Abdul Karim has finally broken her silence on the shortcomings of the law on rape.

Rohani in a statement today said amendments to expand the legal definition of rape would be expedited.

This follows the acquittal for four rape and statutory rape charges against a 60-year-old man who argued his victim had become pregnant because he had used his semen-tainted finger on the underaged girl.

Rohani said prior to the case, the Women, Family and Community Development Ministry had already been in discussions to propose amendments to the definition of rape under the Penal Code.

"The ministry is looking into widening the definition of rape to include the insertion of any object or a part of the body not being the penis into the vagina.

"We would expedite the proposed amendments in light of this case in order to ensure that there will be greater protection of young girls in such cases," she said.

Rape is currently defined in Section 375 of the Penal Code as "sexual intercourse" with a woman under involuntary circumstances.

**Let off on finger**

Previously it was reported that the Court of Appeal had unanimously overturned a Sibul Sessions Court decision to convict the accused Bunya Jalong of one count of rape and three counts of statutory rape that took place at a hotel.

He was originally sentenced in 2013 to 15 years jail and five strokes of the rotan for the first charge, nine years jail and two strokes of the rotan for the three other charges, as well as a RM40,000 fine.

Bunya was reportedly acquitted because the victim's testimony was deemed unreliable, and the accused claimed had used his finger instead of his penis to penetrate her.

This was said to explain the DNA of the victim's baby matching that of the accused.

The decision elicited outrage on both sides of the political divide, with DAP's Kulai MP Teo Nie Ching (above) calling for a review of the country's rape laws, and MCA Wanita chief Heng Seai Kie urging the broadening of the definition of rape.

## **Call to review case**

In a related development, the Kuala Lumpur and Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall (KLSCAH) Women's section urged the Attorney-General's (AG) Chambers to file for a revision to the case, although it can no longer appeal.

"The AG's Chambers should have filed for a revision especially since the present case is of public interest.

"The AG's Chambers must send a strong message to the public that we will never condone such actions.

"Bunya may have gotten lucky because insertion of his finger into the victim's vagina does not constitute rape in the context of the Penal Code.

"He is a paedophile and his act was sexual abuse nonetheless. His rightful place is in the prison," said the group's chairperson Ng Geok Chee in a statement today.

Since Bunya had admitted to inserting his finger into the victim's vagina, she said that constitutes an offence under Section 354 of the Penal Code (using criminal force to outrage modesty) or Section 17(2)(ii) of the Child Act 2001 (sexual abuse).

She said the AG's Chambers's statement that there would be no further appeals since the Court of Appeal is already the apex court for cases originating from the subordinate courts is "regrettable".

The group also backed the amendments to provide for a wider definition of rape.