

Bring that lecherous politician to book if guilty
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I refer to the Malaysiakini
MCPX
report MP under probe for sexual harassment.

Once again power play has interfered in the course of law and crippled the effort of a sexually- violated woman from seeking justice. It was reported that the woman has withdrawn her police report on her own free will.

How can a woman ever 'misunderstand' an attack on her honour? As for this former minister, it is obvious that he probably had done it before but perhaps the matter was never reported due to his still being a minister then. Having such a lecherous politician who is very 'body comfortable' touching other women under the pretext of making jokes is scary news for women. Where did he 'earn' the right to touch a woman who is not his spouse?

This former minister must be reprimanded for his sickening sense of humour, sexist attitude and refusal to accord due respect to women.

Sadly, his latest victim has not only succumbed to external pressure and failed herself but also the womenfolk collectively. Why did the complainant chose to withdraw her report? What were the circumstances that forced her to retract her complaint, that too when it was a matter of her honour?

This is not the first time and will not be the last when women who fall victim to sexual violation have taken back their complaint and live a demoralised existence. Fear of the stigma facing them, the shame they have to endure and often times the threats made by the perpetrator or his family have resulted in such victims purging their allegation.

If this approach continues, the perpetrators will always get away scot-free. And in the case of perpetrators who wield influence, there is no denying their 'involvement' in making sure the case never makes it to court.

In this most recent case involving a former minister, it is obvious that something has gone wrong somewhere for the woman to retract her complaint. It is a frustrating fact that a lot of rape survivors and sexual harassment victims choose to keep quiet instead of lodging a police report for fear of being ostracised by the society. In the case of sexual harassment, the threat of being dismissed from their jobs forces many women to be silent about the crime.

While the woman in this latest case has withdrawn her case for reasons known only to her, it is a correct move by the police not to close the file of this case. The police knows only too well why and what causes a woman to withdraw her case.

Do women now have to carry pepper sprays with them when they are working? Or would be it wrong for them to slap a pervert who attacks them physically or verbally? Women's groups have cried out many a time for ages for safe spaces for women, but it appears that their calls have been given no respect.

This latest issue involving a former minister points to the truth that men, regardless of their race, age and status in life, still view women as sex objects. No matter the achievements of women, they are not seen as respect worthy by men. That explains why in the past several of our members of Parliament (MP) took great delight in sexually harassing women, through words, that is.

What is frustrating, too, is to see the silence from the women's representatives in Parliament. No one has come to the aid of this young restaurant worker or insist that this former minister - who is still an MP - be admonished. The new Women, Family and Community Development Minister Dr Ng Yen Yen and Shahrizat Jalil, who is special adviser to Abdullah Badawi, are both silent on this case.

As for the former minister concerned, a word of caution. 'Scientifically' you assume there is no proof but there are tools of technology that can prove otherwise. Everyone has the right to work in a safe environment.

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