

**Shahrizat Should Be Pro-Active And Courageous In Ensuring A Safe Physical, Emotional And Mental Environment For Children**

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**By Lim Guan Eng**

On the occasion of Malaysia Children's Day, Minister of Women, Family and Community Development, Shahrizat Abdul Jalil should fulfil her Ministerial duty to be pro-active and courageous in upholding the Child Act 2001 and the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child to ensure them a safe physical, emotional and mental environment.

In the past she has paid lip service in opposing child brides but refused to act to take corrective measures. However lately she has even failed to condemn those who lie about innocent children or use innocent children as their object of fun to score political points.

Sharizat's failure to reproach or condemn UMNO Youth President Khairy Jamaluddin for perpetuating a lie that my 16 year old son had sexually outraged the modesty of his classmate shows that Sharizat has failed in her Ministerial duty to protect the basic fundamental rights of a child to live with dignity and safety.

Amongst some UMNO leaders who highlighted this shameful episode in the blogs is Bukit Gelugor (Penang) UMNO Division vice-chairman Dr Novandri Hasan Basri. He was then followed by many UMNO leaders rehashing the lies. Sadly even UMNO Youth chief Khairy Jamaludin joined in these shameful lies by poking fun at my son with this tweet:-

@KhairykjKhairy Jamaluddin

@PapaGomo Mungkin dia roboh Kampung Buah Pala sebab nak ganti dengan Kampung Buah Dada.

Even though the alleged victim had come out with a statement denying the lies, there is no remorse or apology as yet from Khairy or UMNO leaders.

The Child Act 2001 stipulates that every child is entitled to protection and assistance in all circumstances. No protection was afforded to my child when his photo was plastered all over the blogs and some media outlets. Furthermore, this contravenes Article 16 (Protection of Privacy) of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child to which Malaysia is a signatory. No child should be subjected to libel or slander.

What has Sharizat done to protect not just my child but also any child subject to such lies and slander? Violence against children whether physically, emotionally or mentally cuts across all sectors and violates their rights to protection and a safe environment.

I speak for every parent when I say we live for our children. We work to provide a better life for them. We struggle to ensure their world is better than ours. We strive to protect them from the evils of the world, especially when they are still young.

As a father, there is no pain worse than the helplessness you feel when you are unable to defend your innocent child against brutal, inconsiderate and appalling abuse. If you want to finish me off, do your

worst but leave my innocent children alone.

Sharizat had said that as a mother, she constantly fears for her child's safety. The question now is how is she going to act when the emotional security and mental well-being of a child is being violated by lies and slander?

In Malaysia, the Child Act 2001 [Act 611] was enacted to fulfil our obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. In the preamble, it is stated that every child is entitled to protection and assistance in all circumstances without regard to any status.

The provisions of this act are based on four core principles, namely: non-discrimination, best interest of the child, right to life, and respect for the views of the child.

What has she done to act against those responsible, including holding high political office, who have violated the spirit of these laws? Why has she chose to remain silent and passive when failure to act will only encourage more of similar mental and emotional abuse of children in future. Today my child may be the victim but will your or another child be the victim tomorrow.

Let's act now to ensure that the needless trauma that my son had to go through because of such lies is not repeated on another or any innocent child.

## **LIM GUAN ENG**

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