

Ku Nan's remark shows lack of respect for women, says Maria Chin

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Bersih 2.0 chairperson Maria Chin Abdullah, Mariam Mokhtar and Anis Syafiqah given high honour by PKR Wanita Congress for their activist work.

PETALING JAYA: Bersih 2.0 chairperson Maria Chin Abdullah said the recent remarks by Umno secretary-general Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor on how women should dress shows men were still not respecting women or treating them as equals.

"Ku Nan's remarks shows there are MPs who do not understand what is gender equality, or what respecting women means," she said, referring to the Federal Territories minister by his nickname.

She said this while speaking as a guest during the 12th PKR Wanita congress held at the PJ Civic Centre here today.

Tengku Adnan was reported as advising women to "dress shabbily" to avoid harassment while speaking at a Transformasi Nasional 2050 (TN50) dialogue session earlier this week.

She continued her brief speech stating that women who want to change laws are considered as mad feminists.

"Police reports are made against us to shut women's mouths.

"We will not be silent as activists. To bring change we should not be afraid to speak the truth. We are here to change.

"It has been too long we have been told to be silent. Enough is enough," Maria said.

Earlier, Maria and two other woman known for their social activism – Mariam Mokhtar and Anis Shafiqah Md Yusof – were honoured by the PKR Wanita congress.

They received "Wanita Berdaya Harapan Negara – Vote for Change" from PKR Wanita Chief Zuraida Kamaruddin.

The award was to honour those who fight for gender equality.

Maria was detained under the Security Offences (Special Measures) Act (Sosma) last year, just a day before the Bersih 5 rally.

Police raided the Bersih office on Nov 18 under Section 124C of the Penal Code, which relates to attempts to commit an activity detrimental to parliamentary democracy.

Anis Syafiqah, 25, who had been part of a student rally last August, urged women to be an inspiration to other women.

She said women need to continue fighting for the rights of others.

Anis is seen as the face of contemporary student activists in Malaysia.

Last August, Anis joined many youths, mainly comprising university students, in the #TangkapMO1 or #ArrestMO1 rally in Kuala Lumpur.

The group demanded action against the “Malaysian Official 1” (MO1), cited in a US Department of Justice lawsuit to seize assets purchase with funds allegedly embezzled from the state investment fund, 1MDB.

Action was later taken against her and other students of Universiti Malaya (UM) involved in the rally. Anis was found guilty of acting in a manner detrimental and prejudicial to the interests and good reputation of the university, acting in a manner detrimental to public safety, and violating the university’s regulations by organising and participating in the rally.

Mariam Mokhtar, a columnist was not present and the award was received by Halidah Ali.

Mariam who spoke to PKR women through a recorded video said she had faced restriction in writing on certain top leaders in the country and on Islam.

However, she said she will continue to use her commentaries to write on truth and justice.

“We should write more on corruption and abuse of power.”

Meanwhile, PKR Women’s chief Zuraida Kamaruddin in her speech earlier said despite 64% women receiving tertiary education, women are still being sidelined for top positions.

She gave the example of the education sector where 303,716 or 80% of teachers were women while only 3,580 were hired as principals.

At tertiary level, 11,931 out of the 21,077 lecturers were women but only a handful were holding top positions.

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