

It's about violent men, not 'sexy' uniforms

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Zyen

With reference to the article titled MPs turned on by 'sexy' uniforms of MAS stewardesses, I am utterly appalled by the mind-set of those who are supposedly the people's representatives.

Idris Haron's (BN-Tangga Batu) claims that the presence of female cabin staff in their 'sexy' uniforms could lead to rape are totally unfounded. And his analogy about "If we have left our house unlocked and later it was burgled, then who should be blamed? The burglar or the owner?" clearly reflects the prevailing view that women are to blame in the unfortunate event that they are raped.

For his information, leaving your house unlocked is considered carelessness, not a crime. Burglary, like rape, is. And the person to be blamed is the person who perpetrates the crime, not the one who is the victim of the crime.

I would like to highlight that rape is not about sex. Rape is about violence against women. Rape is used as a tool by the rapist to subjugate, intimidate and humiliate the victim. Nor is it the case that men rape because of women who are dressed sexily - many children, elderly women and women who were not dressed sexily have been raped.

Conversely, many men are able to see women in sexy clothes without raping them. So rape is not about women's dressing, it is about some men who choose to dominate and violate women.

There might be a legitimate issue with regards to the uniforms of the stewardess. The aviation industry is one of the guilty parties in using women's sexuality to sell their services. One of the success factors of Singapore Airlines was the propagation of the idea that the passengers will be treated by demure, submissive, sexy, oriental women that are always ready to serve. In my opinion, MAS is trying to follow suit.

I do agree that MAS should ensure that the stewardesses are comfortable with their uniform. If the stewardesses are uncomfortable with it for whatever reason, then by all means change it. But don't change it out of the belief that women should change their dressing to suit men's demands or ideas about how women should behave and dress.

In general, we should not be encouraging people to think that women should change how they dress or behave to prevent men from committing sexual crimes against them. It is men's responsibility to control themselves, not women's to try and control them.

Kudos to the MPs who spoke out against such misogynist and bigoted views. However, it saddens me that the very people we look towards to help correct the prevailing view that men have the right to use violence against women are often the source of its propagation.