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Robbed of a life by fear

By: (Fri, 21 Dec 2007)

I am a young adult with a midnight curfew living in Subang Jaya. Lately, there has been much fear in the neighbourhood following the circulation of e-mails and SMSes about a gang that preys upon young women in the daytime.

Their modus operandi is to kidnap young women and drive them to obscure areas where they are forced to withdraw cash from ATMs, taken on a terror ride and then dropped off elsewhere. Some are reportedly raped or sexually assaulted.

Many parents of young women are extremely concerned and are taking all possible steps to save their daughters from harm. The simplest way they can achieve this is by imposing curfews on their children. Whether this will be an effective means of keeping them safe remains to be seen.

Like me, many of my peers have had their freedom curtailed severely, and live in perpetual fear of falling prey to kidnapers.

Are we happy to restrict ourselves to the relative safety of our houses to avoid harm? Why is it no longer possible for young women to be safe should they choose to venture out at night? And, most pressingly, what are the authorities doing about this?

I have seen police patrol cars doing the rounds in my area in the daytime, which I am grateful for. However, one wonders about the effectiveness of this measure. This culture of fear and paranoia has its roots in deeper issues, and this gang is not the first, nor will it be the last of its kind.

I yearn to be in a community where people, especially young women, do not have to live in constant fear for their safety and wellbeing.

I urge those in power to look into the issue of personal safety. Keeping young women at home past hours is not a long-term solution and also infringes upon our rights.

Melody Song
Subang Jaya

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