

JAG Press Statement: Don't Blame Women For Your Own Bad Decisions

For release on September 8th 2015

The Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG) expresses concern at the comments made by Prime Minister Najib Razak, published by Malaysiakini on September 6th, in which he stated that, "If our wives start acting up, our heads are frayed and we cannot become good leaders or elected representatives." Comments such as these are just another form of scapegoating women, and serve to shift the blame of bad decisions made by elected representatives onto their wives.

Public officials are responsible for their own actions. It is they who were elected by the rakyat, not their spouses. It is not up to an elected representative's wife to make sure her husband is "well-liked by the people", nor should she have to bear the brunt of the repercussions felt from the irresponsible acts of the elected representative. Comments such as the ones made by Prime Minister Najib Razak only serve to perpetuate the patriarchal values in the field of politics in which women are very much seen as secondary or in a supporting role, and that women are always the cause of anything negative.

In a field where women are already facing much discrimination and marginalisation, such statements, especially made by our nation's leader, should not be tolerated. Women have many roles to play, including as elected representatives themselves, as well as wives and mothers.

Endorsed by the Joint Action Group For Gender Equality:

1. All Women's Action Society (AWAM)
2. Association of Women Lawyers (AWL)
3. Perak Women for Women (PWW)
4. Persatuan Sahabat Wanita Selangor (PSWS)
5. Persatuan Kesedaran Komuniti Selangor (EMPOWER)
6. Sisters In Islam (SIS)
7. Tenaganita
8. Women's Aid Organisation (WAO)

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