

Aiyoh... Wat Lah?! Awards

Joint Action Group
for Gender Equality
(JAG)



The Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG) comprises:

*All Women's Action Society (AWAM)
Association of Women Lawyers (AWL)
Perak Women for Women Society (PWW)
Persatuan Kesedaran Komuniti Selangor (EMPOWER)
Persatuan Sahabat Wanita Selangor (PSWS)
Sisters in Islam (SIS)
Sabah Women's Action Resource Group (SAWO)
Tenaganita
Women's Aid Organisation (WAO)
Women's Centre for Change, Penang (WCC)*

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Voting Link: bit.ly/aiyoh2015*

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Equating women politicians with “leaking pipes” due to menses. Aiyoh... Wat Lah!

PETALING JAYA – The Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG) wishes to express its deep disappointment in response to the recent statement made by a Barisan Nasional MP for Baling Kedah, YB Abdul Azeez Abdul Rahim, in the Dewan Rakyat. On the 9th of April, during a debate on the Sedition Act amendment bill, YB Abdul Azeez reportedly questioned the capability of women representatives when charged with the task of visiting mosques in their constituencies. “If women as elected representatives go for breaking fast events in the mosque compound that’s fine,” he reportedly said, “but if they enter the mosque, we don’t know if she *bocor* (leaks) or not.” When probed, YB Abdul Azeez further equated women with leaking pipes, then claimed to have never made the statement in the first place.

YB Abdul’s Azeez’s reference to women’s menses to discriminate against women and question their capability to perform in the political arena is a gross act of irrational discrimination, which reduces women to their biological functions. These functions are merely part of a woman’s body, and are not connected to her ability to lead with commitment to, and integrity in her role. The view exhibited

by YB Abdul Azeez in his remark expresses a patriarchal view about the inferiority of women, that is cloaked in religiosity.

In addition to the Federal Constitution prohibiting gender discrimination, Malaysia is also a party to CEDAW, which means that our government, and its representatives, are bound to eliminate all forms of discriminations against women. We have a legal and moral obligation to break down harmful beliefs such as the one expressed by YB Abdul Azeez.

This type of discrimination against women in politics is a sadly repetitive trend in Malaysia. The nominations for this year's JAG-driven 'Aiyoh Wat Lah!' Awards have recognised this disturbing and tired trend in its *Enough Already!* category. We had hoped that 2015 would spell the end of the view that women are incapable of political participation due to menses, but the treatment of YBhg. Dato' Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail last year and now YB Abdul Azeez's baffling equation of women with "leaking pipes" proves this is not the case.

If you have had enough of such sexist statements, check out JAG's 'Aiyoh Wat Lah!' nominations, and make your opinion count against the worst of Malaysia's sexism, misogyny, homophobia and transphobia. The link for voting can be found here: <http://bit.ly/aiyoh2015>. Voting closes on April 19th, 2015 (Sunday).

As for this recent exhibition of gross sexist discrimination, keep an eye out for next year's nominations!

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