

PRESS STATEMENT

For immediate release: 23 August 2014

Hentikan Rogol: Aku Kisah!

(Stop Rape: I Care!)

Organised by the Citizens Against Rape (CAR)

Coordinated by the Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG)

The last few months have revealed a number of shocking gang rape cases across the nation. First, it was Kelantan where two teenage girls were alleged to have been brutally raped by a large group of men, including a father and his two sons. Then it was a 13 year-old being sexually assaulted by six soldiers in Johor. Recently, in Terengganu, four men were reported to have raped another teenager. As well, there are other rape cases being reported in the media on an almost daily basis, some involving a disconcerting level of brutality.

In fact, police statistics show an almost threefold increase in reported rapes from the year 2000 to 2009. In 2012, nearly 3,000 rape cases were reported, which translates to eight rapes a day. If the phenomenon of underreporting is taken into account, the extent of rape in the country is easily much larger than what meets the eye.

Hentikan Rogol: Aku Kisah!

This troubling situation has prompted us to organise *Hentikan Rogol: Aku Kisah!* a call to action against rape and other forms of sexual violence. This initiative seeks to:

- Raise public awareness that rape and sexual violence are *never* acceptable
- Demand state accountability to effectively address these crimes.

Towards this end, we have already held a public forum in Kelantan and various activities in Sabah. Today, we are holding a series of other events across the nation. Apart from this gathering in Kuala Lumpur, there are similar public actions in Marudi (Sarawak), Kota Kinabalu (Sabah), and Ipoh (Perak), all to

protest against rape and other forms of sexual violence (see Appendix A for details).

What do we want?

Although Malaysia has the necessary laws to sufficiently punish rapists, there has been a failure at national, state and community levels to acknowledge the severity of the prevalence of sexual violence in this country. We call upon everyone – from the Najib administration to the ordinary person on the street – to recognise that rape is endemic here. Each of us must take constructive steps to address the root causes of rape to eradicate it. However, we also call upon the government and the relevant agencies to adopt the following measures of due diligence in addressing this matter:

1) Prevention: Introduce preventive education and public awareness programmes that address gender stereotyped roles and attitudes which perpetuate and encourage violence. The Ministries of Education, Health as well as Women, Family and Community Development have an urgent duty to make this a reality. Effective and early implementation of these programmes is a critical step to ensure the elimination of long-held prejudices and beliefs which result in the violation of the rights of women and girls, and endangers their safety within our communities. It is also necessary to compile and make publicly available statistics and data on violence against women and girls. This will both reveal the severity of the sexual violence and assist in formulating effective responses to such crimes.

2) Protection: Take the necessary measures to ensure that adequate protection against violence is provided to all women and girls in Malaysia. The government should establish service centres for victims of sexual assault, both citizens and non-citizens alike, in every state in Malaysia. Rape survivors need a safe environment, protected from further trauma and assisted in accessing justice. At the same time, our communities must commit to actively increasing awareness and vigilance against incidents of sexual violence that occur in our midst. We must realise that creating a safer, gender-sensitised society for all is every individual and community's responsibility.

3) Prosecution and Punishment: Ensure effective enforcement to hold perpetrators of acts of sexual violence accountable. There must be a stricter adherence to existing protocols in dealing with sexual crimes. Law enforcers, judicial officers and public office bearers must be better trained to ensure that prompt, thorough and skilful investigations and prosecutions are carried out to the highest of standards, irrespective of the location of the crime or the ethnicity or religion of the victim. Currently, less than 10 per cent of reported rapes are brought to trial. Of these it is estimated that less than a third are convicted. This is an indictment of the Government of Malaysia's failure to adequately address violence against women.

4) Provision of reparations or redress: Ensure that effective support services for victims/survivors of violence against women are put in place and made accessible to all women and girls in Malaysia. Such initiatives must include refuges, counselling, and rehabilitation services. Prison systems themselves need to be transformed to focus on the longer-term rehabilitation of perpetrators.

In line with the above, we also remind the Malaysian government to step up and fulfil its obligations under General Recommendation No.19 by the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Why Citizens Against Rape?

Citizens Against Rape was first initiated in 1987, in response to the brutal rape and murder of a nine-year old, Ang Mei Hong, in Kuala Lumpur. It came together again as a platform for all members of the public to protest against other equally horrific rape and murder cases: Audrey Melissa George (1999), Noor Suzaili Mukhtar (2000), Canny Ong (2003).

Today, we are calling ourselves Citizens Against Rape again to provide an avenue for anyone – regardless of sex, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, nationality, etc. – concerned about rape and other forms of sexual violence, to show they care about the frequency and violent nature of such crimes, and to commit themselves to help end this. We each can play a role.

Enough is enough. Hentikan Rogol: Aku Kisah!

Issued by the Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG)

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

Appendix A: Nationwide action details

Kuala Lumpur

7:45pm, Saturday 23 August 2014
SOGO, Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman, Kuala Lumpur
Action: Speeches, street theatre at SOGO. Walk to Dataran Merdeka. Bring your own candles/lighter/torchlight!
Contact: All Women's Action Society (AWAM): 03-7877 4221; and Women's Aid Organisation (WAO): 03-7957 5636
Facebook: "Candlelight Vigil: #HentikanRogol, Aku Kisah! (Kuala Lumpur)"

Ipoh, Perak

3pm, Saturday 23 August 2014
Ipoh Parade Shopping Centre (opposite Sam Tet School)
Action: Gathering, short walk, 1 Billion Rising dance
Contact: Perak Women for Women Society (PWW):
perakwomenforwomen@gmail.com / 05-5469715

Marudi, Sarawak

4pm, Saturday, 23rd August 2014
Marudi
Action: Gathering, candlelight vigil
Contact: Hellan, Borneo Resources Institute Malaysia (014 594 9945)

Kota Kinabalu, Sabah

5pm, Saturday, 23rd August 2014
Sutera Harbour Resort, Sutera Harbour Boulevard
Action: Wear campaign tshirt at 7K Sunset Charity Run, booth, 1 Billion Rising dance
Contact: Sabah Women's Action Resource Group (SAWO): 088-269291
Facebook: "Candlelight Vigil: #HentikanRogol, Aku Kisah! (Kota Kinabalu)"