

Our view on the recent domestic violence videos - Awam

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Recently, two videos depicting situations of domestic violence has surfaced on YouTube, and has even become front page news in The Star over two days (15 and 16 August).

While these videos have created an outpouring of anger and outrage against the abusers and sympathy for the women as well as their children who witnessed the violence, sadly, many more of such incidences of domestic violence go unreported and unresolved.

According to statistics from Polis Di-Raja Malaysia (PDRM), a total number of 3,488 cases of domestic violence were reported in 2012, and 3,277 cases in 2011. This translates to an increase of 211 cases. Many more go unseen, and unreported.

One question which has arisen from these videos, is the impact of domestic violence on children.

In one of the videos, two children can be seen witnessing the father beating up their mother in the lift. In the other, the daughter of the woman apparently recorded the incident.

Children in situations of domestic violence experience physical, psychological and emotional effects which can be severe and long lasting.

We commend the actions of the police in taking these two incidences seriously and the speedy issuance of an interim protection order. However, such responses should be the norm, instead of one-off responses due to a video going viral or only after public outrage.

Awam calls for more front-line training to ensure that officers dealing with domestic violence reports are able to treat such cases properly, and provide the protection needed by victims.

The Domestic Violence Act should also include intimate partner abuse, which it currently does not cover.

This would ensure that incidences such as that of the man beating his ex-girlfriend on the head with a hammer can also be given relevant attention. They had previously been in a relationship for 10 years prior to the incident.

In addition, counselling should be offered as a matter of course for victims, including children. Perpetrators should receive compulsory counselling.

The All Women's Action Society (Awam) believes that no woman or child should live in fear. Much has to be done to build awareness on this issue.

Awam calls for more effective implementation of the protection under the Domestic Violence Act and speedy legal redress for victims.

Awam provides legal information and counselling for women and children facing violence at our Telenita line 03-78770224. - August 16, 2013.