



## **Women do not owe their husbands sex**

**KUALA LUMPUR, April 29th 2015** - Last week, Damansara Utama DAP Assemblyperson Yeo Bee Yin, along with AWAM, launched a digital rape awareness campaign with the tagline 'No Excuse to Rape' Since then, there has been widespread debate on the topic, the most heated comments being directed at the issue of marital rape, which includes the issue of forced sex between husband and wife.

Whilst Section 376 of the Penal Code, states that whoever commits rape shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to 20 years, and shall be liable to whipping, marital rape is not legally recognised in the country. However, the new Section 375A states that any husband causing fear of death or hurt to his wife in order to have sex shall be punished for term which may extend to five years. While this section is not satisfactory as it does not criminalise marital rape directly, at the very least, it recognises that husbands do not have the right to force themselves on their wives.

AWAM is therefore shocked by recent comments from public figures, such as Perak Mufti Sri Harussani Zakaria, who stated women must always have sex with their husbands when asked to, even when they're "riding on the back of the camel" and spokesman from Hizbut Tahrir Malaysia, Ustaz Abdul Hakim Othman, who stated, "Even if it's by force, it's not sinful for him; the sin is on his wife."

Such comments strip married women of all agency and control over their own bodies. They are incredibly demeaning as they treat women as objects and properties of their husbands instead of human beings. To say that a husband has the license to rape his wife is incredibly shocking. Entering into a marriage does not mean that a woman's body belongs to her husband and she is subject to his every whim. Women do not lose their basic human rights just because they enter into marriage.

AWAM would like to express our great disappointment at these reactions to the rape awareness campaign video. In light of it bringing forward the shocking statistics on the issue of rape in Malaysia, we believe there should be more public discourse on what can be done to lessen the prevalence of rape and rape culture in our community, and less debate on the damaging interpretations of what a woman allegedly "owes" her husband.

These reactions only serve to show why this awareness campaign video was so necessary in the first place.

---

For more information, please contact Evelynne Gomez at 03 7877 4221