



All Women's Action Society (AWAM)
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Women's biological functions not an impediment to women's leadership

PETALING JAYA, 15 July 2014 - The All Women's Action Society (AWAM) is appalled at the sexist comment made by UMNO lawyer Datuk Mohd Hafarizam Harun. A woman's menses is part of her biological make-up and does not in any way prevent her from having leadership abilities, commitment and the integrity to lead.

The attempt by Hafarizam to use religion as a justification for his sexist remark is not only discriminatory but also irrational. Such statements feed into myths about the inferiority of women, which leads to discrimination against women both in public spaces as well as at home. There have in fact been and continue to be, many female Muslim leaders who are capable and worthy leaders.

The Malaysian Federal Constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender. In addition, Malaysia as a party to CEDAW, must meet its obligation to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women, including in public and political life. This includes taking active measures to address stereotypes, prejudice and practices which are used to justify the restriction of women's enjoyment of their fundamental rights.

We have a legal and moral obligation to ensure that women enjoy equality of rights in all fields, including in public and political life.

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