

LIST OF NOMINEES BY CATEGORY

CATEGORY: FOOT IN MOUTH

| Nominees | Background and basis for nomination |
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| 1. Women who marry foreigners are "traitors to the country" (Nov 2011) | <p>Ng Wei Aik (DAP Penang State Assembly Person) was reported to have called two women married to foreigners "traitors to the country." He later denied having made the remarks and threatened to sue Utusan Malaysia and the two women over this allegation.</p> <p><i>How often do we hear men who marry non-Malaysians labelled as traitors to their country? Nationalist sentiments are often used to make women bear the burden of being symbolic markers of their nation and communities. In many cases, such arguments are used to limiting women's freedoms and rights. In this instance, women have a right to determine if, when, and whom to marry.</i></p> |
| 2. A pregnant woman is unfit to contest in the general elections (2 Jan 2011) | <p>Tan Keng Liang (Kedah Gerakan Youth Chief) had implied that state assemblywoman Hannah Yeoh was unfit to contest in the forthcoming general election because she would "be on maternity leave soon." Tan's remark on Twitter: "Would u [sic] choose @jezlai or @hannahyeoh which [sic] will be on maternity leave soon?"</p> <p><i>Just because a woman is pregnant and needs maternity leave does not make her a poor candidate for the elections. This tweet ignores women's reproductive contributions and Malaysia's obligation to ensure substantive equality for women in all spaces, including politics.</i></p> |
| 3. "Mungkin dia roboh Kampung Buah Pala sebab nak ganti dengan Kampung Buah Dada" (17 Oct 2011) | <p>In response to allegations that Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng's son had molested a schoolmate, Khairy Jamaluddin (UMNO Youth Chief) tweeted "Mungkin dia [Guan Eng] roboh Kampung Buah Pala sebab nak ganti dengan Kampung Buah Dada."</p> <p><i>Sexist jokes are demeaning and often rely on making fun of women or, as in this instance, parts of the female body. Many Malaysians find it hard to talk about sex openly, and joking has become one way of circumventing this. Nevertheless, this also reinforces the shroud of secrecy, and with it, a culture of shame around women's bodies.</i></p> |
| 4. Unwanted buildings are like an "old woman" (22 Feb 2011) | <p>Teng Hock Nam (Penang Gerakan Chief) likened the soon-to-be constructed Penang International Convention Centre to an 'old woman' when developers hand it back to the state government at the end of its lease in 30 years. He later said that he was merely trying to use the analogy of how a woman would be disregarded after she had lived the best part of her life.</p> <p><i>Women are frequently objectified in ways that are meant to put them down. While Teng may rightly recognise the unfairness behind how some men consider women of a certain age 'discardable', he need not have reinforced this belief through such an analogy.</i></p> |

CATEGORY: INSULTING INTELLIGENCE

| Nominees | Background and basis for nomination |
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| 1. Homosexuality is unconstitutional because it goes against Islam (21 Nov 2011) | <p>Nazri Aziz (de facto Law Minister) was reported claiming that homosexuality is unconstitutional as it is against Islam, which is the official religion of the country.</p> <p><i>While the Constitution may recognise Islam as the religion of the federation, this does not mean that something that is perceived as un-Islamic is unconstitutional. Furthermore, there is no law in the country that criminalises homosexuality per se.</i></p> |
| 2. "Women drivers are the cause of the high rate of road accidents in Malaysia due to their recklessness" (28 Mar 2011) | <p>Member of Parliament Bung Mokhtar made this comment during the March Dewan Rakyat sitting.</p> <p><i>This remark rests on the assumption that all women are the same. In reality, there are some women who are bad drivers, just as there are some men who are bad drivers. Stereotypes like this perpetuate myths about women, usually with the effect of limiting their full potential.</i></p> |
| 3. Seksualiti Merdeka is "not based on the true principles of human rights" (5 Nov 2011) | <p>Ahmad Zamri As'ad Khuzaimi (PAS Youth Wing) was reported saying that Seksualiti Merdeka, a local sexuality rights festival, "is not based on true human rights" which are based on religion as no religion supports homosexuality. He also reportedly noted that "Article 16 of the UDHR clearly states that it is the fundamental right of an individual to come into a marriage, between a man and a woman, and not between the same sex."</p> <p><i>Seksualiti Merdeka advocates for everyone's right to be free from discrimination, harassment, and violence on the basis of their sexual orientation and gender identity. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is the foundational text of international human rights. Read both in terms of specific provisions and as a whole, it guarantees such freedoms for all human beings. The UDHR also guarantees the right to freedom of expression and assembly. Furthermore, the actual provision of Article 16 reads: "Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family..." It does not explicitly limit marriage to that between men and women.</i></p> |
| 4. Extramarital affairs are caused by "wives who neglect their responsibilities" to their husbands (7 Apr 2011) | <p>Ibrahim Ali (Perkasa) was reported to have attributed the high rate of extramarital affairs to "wives who neglect their responsibilities" to their husbands.</p> <p><i>This remark misunderstands the nature of marriage as an equal partnership. Blaming infidelity on wives merely ignores the role of men in failed relationships and takes responsibility away from those who have such affairs.</i></p> |
| 5. Discussions on gender equality promote values against Islam (29 Oct 2011) | <p>The Majlis Perundangan Pertubuhan Islam Malaysia (MAPIM) criticised organisers of a roundtable discussion on gender equality, particularly for highlighting issues faced by lesbians and bisexual women, noting that such discussions are "secretly aimed at fuelling campaigns and advocacy to change the values and moral foundations of Islam that are central to Malay-Muslims and Malaysians in general."</p> <p><i>This remark reflects a lack of understanding about gender equality and indicates the use of Islam to justify the demonisation of sexual minorities and to legitimise homophobia.</i></p> |
| 6. Humanity will become extinct as a result of homosexual relations (10 Nov 2011) | <p>The Mufti of Pahang, Abdul Rahman Osman was reported as saying that humanity would become extinct as a result of homosexual relations and that Muslims would become "murtad" if they supported or were involved in "seks songsang".</p> <p><i>Humanity may be in danger of extinction, not least due to the environmental destruction which we each contribute to every day, but low birthrates due to homosexual relations do not figure as a factor. This remark also demonstrates the use of Islam to justify conservative positions.</i></p> |

CATEGORY: CANNOT IGNORE

| Nominees | Background and basis for nomination |
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| 1. Women in Malaysia are fortunate as there is no gender discrimination in the workplace (31 Jan 2011) | <p>While acknowledging the role of women in the country's development at the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development's 10th anniversary celebration, Prime Minister Najib Razak was reported to have said that "if more women are willing to build their career, be it in government or private sector, I am confident they can fill high positions offered in these sectors." Najib was further reported to have said that women in Malaysia were lucky as there was no gender discrimination in the workplace to hinder them from holding high-ranking positions.</p> <p><i>The Prime Minister ignores some stark realities of women's lives. For instance: women are still expected to juggle work in and out of their homes; glass ceilings continue to prevent many women from reaching the top of their workplace; and UNDP figures reveal that in the private sector, for every RM1 that men make at work, women only get RM0.42, the lowest in ASEAN (Human Development Report, 2010).</i></p> |
| 2. Forcing two women to perform nude squats for 'illegally' entering the country (Jun 2011) | <p>Immigration officers were reported to have detained two women and made them perform nude squats because they had not followed immigration procedures upon entering the country. The Home Ministry, in a written reply to a question in Parliament, said the checks were done in a "good and orderly" fashion.</p> <p><i>Clearly intended to humiliate and degrade, these actions are unbecoming and unacceptable for any human being, be they men or women. The Home Ministry's response to the matter demonstrates its arrogance rather than recognition that this punishment is a form of torture which is prohibited under international human rights law.</i></p> |
| 3. The MCA is "a wife who complains all day long that she was being abused, raped and not given enough food, but yet does not want to divorce her husband" (24 Mar 2011) | <p>Nazri Abdul Aziz (Minister in the Prime Minister's Department) was reported to have made this remark in reference to a complaint by some MCA members of having lost their seats due to UMNO's arrogance.</p> <p><i>Like the "old woman" remark above, this one is meant to put down someone (or something) through a demeaning analogy. Women are typical targets for such demeaning analogies. Nazri not only allegedly insults wives for complaining "all day long" but also trivialises the serious crimes of domestic violence and rape in the process.</i></p> |
| 4. Sexual harassment by women's rights groups (31 Mar 2011) | <p>When women's rights groups criticised him for saying that women drivers are the reason for the high rate of accidents in the country, Bung Mokhtar (Member of Parliament) declared that he was being sexually harassed. He reportedly said "women, please don't be offended. I had no intention of belittling (women). Women are gifts from Allah who should be taken care of as best possible... Please don't think I am sexist or your enemy, I take care of them (women) too..." After his comments were defended by fellow parliamentarians, Bung said, "I thank my friends for their explanations, sebab kita sama sama pencinta wanita (we are all lovers of women)."</p> <p><i>Bung Mokhtar's comments make light of sexual harassment, a crime whose victims are overwhelmingly women. Given his previous views and statements on women (e.g., in 2007 he caused an uproar for responding to a discussion on leaks in the Parliament building after heavy downpours, "Where's the leak? The Batu Gajah MP leaks every month too"), it is debatable how sincere his apology is.</i></p> |

CATEGORY: LEAST HELPFUL TO THE SISTERHOOD

| Nominees | Background and basis for nomination |
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| 1. Women should refrain from the “cah ketiing” (backstabbing) culture (2 Jul 2011) | <p>While speaking at an event in Kota Bharu, Rosmah Mansor, the Prime Minister’s wife, reportedly told women to stop backstabbing each other.</p> <p><i>Women are often blamed for causing their own ‘downfall’. While at a superficial level this may hold true for some women, this argument ignores the systemic and structural obstacles and inequalities that women as a social group face daily.</i></p> |
| 2. Wives who don’t satisfy their husbands are the cause of illicit sex (28 Nov 2011) | <p>The Obedient Wives Club (OWC) reportedly blamed wives whose husbands cheat for failing to ‘satisfy’ them. OWC has offered sex lessons to help wives “serve their husbands better than a first-class prostitute” to promote harmonious marriages.</p> <p><i>This solution does not recognise that all relationships are a two-way process which requires shared values and a lot of hard work! Blaming just one party, in this case, women, is not only unhelpful but also perpetuates the stigmatisation of women whose marriages have broken down for reasons that go far beyond failed sexual satisfaction.</i></p> |

CATEGORY: AD NAUSEAM

| Nominees | Background and basis for nomination |
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| 1. Repeated references to prostitutes in a negative way (Nov 2011) | <p>(1) Nga Kor Ming (DAP Perak State Assemblyperson) was reported to have called the Perak Deputy Speaker a “political prostitute”. (2) Hee Yit Foong (Perak State Assembly Deputy Speaker) responded, “Does the opposition representative like prostitutes? Is [sic] so, I can bring.” (3) Chew Lee Giok (Wanita MCA Secretary-General) was reported stating that “describing someone as a prostitute is very insulting indeed.”</p> <p><i>All these remarks are premised on a belief that sex workers are not full human beings who have rights and contribute to the economy.</i></p> |

CATEGORY: POLICY FAIL

| Nominee | Background and basis for nomination |
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| 1. State-run boot camp targeting teenage boys who display effeminate behaviour (21 Apr 2011) | <p>The Terengganu State government was reported as having introduced a state-run boot camp to ‘cure’ teenage boys of effeminate behaviour.</p> <p><i>Humans come in all shapes and sizes, including differing degrees of masculinity and femininity. The idea that all men have to be masculine and all women feminine not only fails to recognise that gender is a social construction but also justifies the stigmatisation and persecution of those who do not conform to the imposed dominant norm.</i></p> |
| 2. Non-recognition of male-to-female transgenders as women (Jul 2011) | <p>The government refuses to recognise male-to-female transgenders as women. This was highlighted in the case of Aleesha Farhana, 25, who died following a failed bid to officially change her name after undergoing a sex change operation.</p> <p><i>The Malaysian government continues to deny male-to-female transgenders official recognition as women. This causes all kinds of problems when they try to lead their lives with their chosen gender identities, often resulting in them being stigmatised, discriminated against, and subjected to human rights violations.</i></p> |

CATEGORY: RIGHT ON TRACK

| Nominees | Background and basis for nomination |
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| 1. Sex education or reproductive and social health education introduced as a subject in the National Service Training Programme (17 Feb 2011) | <p>The Ministry for Women, Family and Community Development introduced a sex education module in the National Service Training programme. This was developed by the National Population and Family Development Board, the Ministry of Health, Federation Reproductive Health Associations Malaysia, All Women's Action Society, Women's Aid Organisation, and the Pacific Outreach Society.</p> <p><i>In a society where sex education is still considered a controversial matter despite the problems of having a sexually uninformed younger populace, this development is a welcomed one. It offers the opportunity to impart key lessons about the "positive relationship between gender such as mutual respect between male and female trainees" as well as "reproductive health and violence issues".</i></p> |
| 2. Decision that CEDAW is binding on the Malaysian government and that using pregnancy as a reason not to employ a person is a form of gender discrimination (12 Jul 2011) | <p>In the case of <i>Noorfadilla binti Ahmad Saikin v Chayed bin Basirun and Others</i>, High Court Judge Zaleha Yusof held that "there is no impediment for the Court to refer to CEDAW in interpreting Article 8(2) of the Federal Constitution. Hence, applying Article 1 and 11 of CEDAW I hold that pregnancy in this case was a form of gender discrimination. The plaintiff should have been entitled to be employed as a GSTT even if she was pregnant."</p> <p><i>More than 15 years after Malaysia ratified the CEDAW Convention, a local judge has finally paved the way and shown that this treaty is binding on the government. This means potentially pushing the government to recognise the highest standards of rights for women to ensure that all of them enjoy equality and non-discrimination.</i></p> |
| 3. Opposing the ban on Seksualiti Merdeka and all threats and acts of violence against any Malaysian including the LGBT Community (4 Nov 2011) | <p>A statement was issued by the Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism and Taoism (MCCBCHST) that "condemns the hateful speech directed to members of that community to date, and the blanket ban on the Seksualiti Merdeka festival assembling peacefully in a private place to hold concerts, speeches and forums."</p> <p><i>Against a loud and aggressive backlash to Seksualiti Merdeka, this apex body of religious groups stepped forth and issued this statement to make public its stand against hate speech directed at sexual minorities as well as the curtailment of the freedom of assembly.</i></p> |
| 4. The Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act 2012 (27 Dec 2011) | <p>Positive changes have been introduced by the government to the Domestic Violence Act, including: adding "psychological abuse, including emotional injury" to the definition of domestic violence; making domestic violence a seizable offence, which allows the police to investigate and arrest immediately; the automatic attachment of the power to arrest to every protection order when violence is likely; and enabling protection orders to prohibit or restrict the perpetrator from communicating by any means with the protected person.</p> <p><i>After many years of lobbying, the Government finally incorporated several recommendations of women's groups to make the Domestic Violence Act more effective for victims of abuse.</i></p> |