

# Crime and decent living

## Expert: Minimum wage can help reduce cases

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**PETALING JAYA:** The Government can contribute to crime reduction by creating an environment which enables the poorest to make a decent living.

Criminologist Dr P. Sundramoorthy said some people turned to crime when driven by poverty and usually, these cases occurred when the opportunity arose.

"The Government has to seriously consider implementing minimum wage because many who have menial jobs do not earn in proportionate to the cost of living," he said.

On April 14, a 45-year-old single mother was sentenced to four years' jail for robbing a man of RM220.

A. Parameswary told the judge that she committed the offence because she could not support her family with her salary of RM350 as

a shop assistant. Also on the same day, *China Press* reported that a canteen helper, Fatimah, 22, worked as a prostitute at night in Alor Setar to support her odd-job worker husband and one-year-old son, and pay her parents' medical bills.

Sundramoorthy said a RM350 monthly income was far below the poverty line and barely covered the needs of a single person living in the city.

"The Government must set a minimum wage that covers food, housing, transport and children's education," he said.

MTUC president Syed Shahrir Syed Mohamud said its survey found that a person living in the Klang Valley needed at least RM30 a day for meals, transport and lodging.

However, people were still getting a ridiculous salary of RM12 a day, which was at the hardcore poverty level, he said.

"The Prime Minister recently announced that the people must come first, so these are the people we are talking about," he added.

Empower executive director Maria Chin Abdullah said the Government must implement a minimum wage as soon as possible, otherwise poverty-related problems would persist and to some extent, contribute to people committing crime.

"Having low income is especially difficult for single mothers," she said.

While not denying that consumerism had driven people towards materialism and acquiring wealth regardless of the means, Chin said a minimum wage was important in ensuring that people got their basic needs.

"It's more sustainable for people to earn enough for themselves than to give out charity, which is meant only for the short term," she said.

### CITY POLICE INTEGRATED CRIME OPS FOR APRIL 18, 2009

<b>People screened</b>	<b>2,171</b>
Summonses issued	239
Vehicles inspected	1,417
Vehicles seized	0

<b>Total arrests</b>	<b>35</b>
Criminal cases	5
Drugs	4
Illegal immigrants & others	26

<b>Total robberies and snatch thefts reported</b>	<b>25</b>
Unarmed robberies (gangs)	14
Unarmed robberies (individual)	7
Snatch thefts	4



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