

# Stop paedophiles... and child marriages

**NOT SERIOUS:** We are not doing enough to safeguard our children from the monsters in our midst

UK  
R.D.  
M.B.P.J.  
2016

NST  
11/6/2016  
m1S 14 -15

**P**ARENTS often pray they never have to deal with several nightmare scenarios where their precious children are concerned.

They hope their bundle of joy won't grow up to be a burdensome source of woe; that they don't suffer indignities or ill health; or worse, fall into gorilla enclosures in zoos.

More hair-raising than all the above, however, is when your child becomes the target of evil and depraved beings far worse than any creature in the animal kingdom. While some may protest the shooting of silverback gorilla Harambe to protect a boy at the Cincinnati Zoo, most would unlikely even raise a whimper if 10 or more paedophiles had to be shot dead to protect little children.

This is no longer an implausible concern. Paedophiles walk among us — they can be someone we least suspect to be so, that mild-mannered foreign English teacher, friendly freelance

photographer, or even bright-eyed scholarship holder — as recent cases have only very clearly shown.

Frighteningly, these evildoers no longer need physical access to our young ones. The Internet has helped to increasingly widen the reach of these predators, who only need an Internet connection to gain entry into our homes.

Indeed, digital technology is changing the scale and form of child sexual abuse and exploitation.

The most recent case involving British paedophile Richard Huckle was brought to light through his activities on the Dark Web, an area of the Internet not easily accessible to the general user.

He pleaded guilty in a London court to 71 child abuse offences, which were largely committed against babies and small children, right under our noses, in our very own backyard.

This shocking case, which is still making headlines around the world, underscores the urgent need for Malaysians to carry out some soul-searching.

Are we doing enough to safeguard our children? More importantly, do we take paedophilia seriously and see it

SLINGSHOT



CHOK  
SUAT LING



*The Internet has helped to **widen the reach of these predators**, who only need an **Internet connection to gain entry into our homes.***

# Do more to prevent child sex abuse

**PAEDOPHILIA:** We need effective laws, intelligence gathering and sharing, and enhanced investigation capabilities



NST  
11/6/2016  
m/s 15

**P**AEDOPHILIA is not a new sex crime. What is new is the attention that it is getting in the public arena in Malaysia, especially after the case of Richard Huckle. In fact, paedophilia has developed into a hot topic in criminology.

Paedophiles prefer to have sex with children. Their taste and desire are for children, through whom they achieve sexual pleasure and excitement. They have an abnormal and an unnatural desire and attraction for sexual relations only with children.

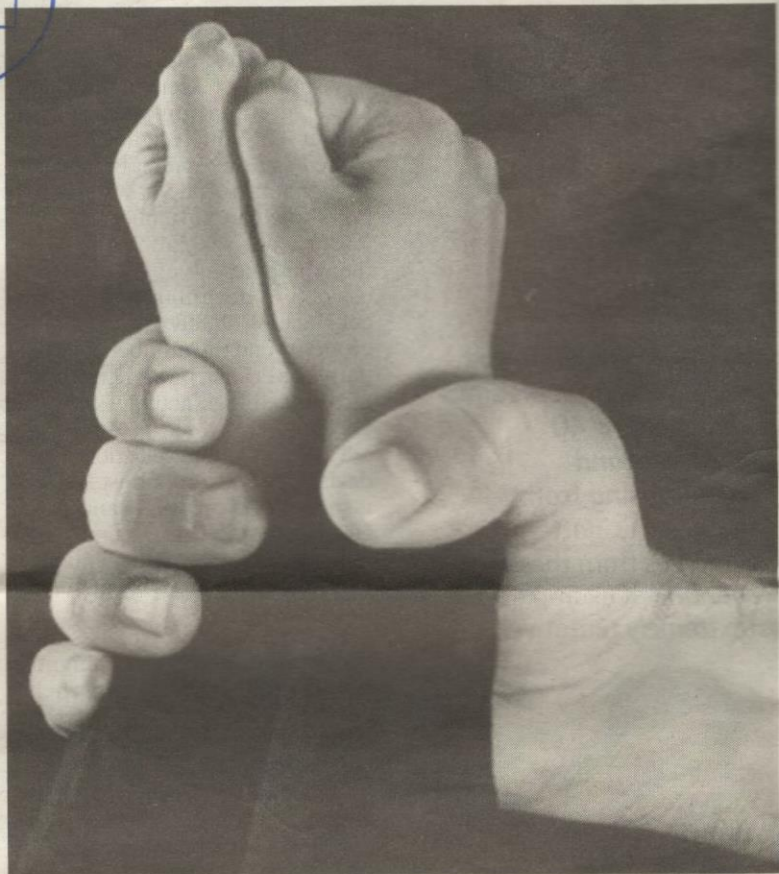
Sexual abuse of children can begin without people recognising it because it can be a small act in everyday life. Paedophiles come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. It can be anybody and demonstrate similar characteristics. They are normally male, from any race, educated or uneducated, young or old, rich or poor, employed or unemployed, religious or non-religious, a father, family member or trusted co-worker or professional; they come in every aspect.

Huckle used "wealth and status as a Westerner" to exploit children. They hide behind the cloak of normality, morality and respectability within the community.

Research revealed that nine out of 10 are close to the mothers of their victims.

One of the most popular criminological theories is the notion that criminal behaviour is learned in association with those who have criminal attitudes and values.

Therefore, the majority of criminologists believe that the behaviour of a paedophile is caused by environmental factors (nurture) involving the upbringing and life experiences of the individual. Furthermore, most paedophiles confess that they themselves were victims of sex abuse as a child.



**Parents must make sure their children are not exposed to situations where irresponsible people can take advantage of them.**

Paedophiles are sociopaths whose behaviour is antisocial, lack a sense of empathy and moral responsibility for their victims, the disorder is chronic and lifelong.

Studies show that paedophiles have a high recidivism rate and are repeat offenders after imprisonment or treatment.

Criminogenic asymmetries factors, such as a relaxed atmosphere and weaknesses in laws and enforcement resulting in criminal opportunity, motivate foreign paedophiles like Huckle to take advantage of weak internal controls in a country to look for victims.

To fight this crime, we need legislative changes, more effective laws, intelligence gathering and sharing, technology, such as facial recognition systems, and enhanced investigation capabilities by trained spe-

Crime prevention should be the priority for police but that should not be their responsibility alone.

To prevent crime is the obligation of everyone in society, and parents, schools and families have a responsibility to ensure children are safe. They must also instil in children a strong appreciation of right and wrong.

Parents, being the most important people in their children's lives, must make sure children are not exposed to situations where irresponsible people can take advantage of them.

They must pay attention and respond when any adult seems overly focused on befriending a child, make a spot check on child nannies and babysitters and do not allow a child to go alone on vacation or spend the night with someone other than those proven to be trustworthy.

At this point, our country still does not have a **central registry for child abusers and paedophiles.**



However, recent studies revealed that paedophilia is also fostered by genetic or biological traits (nature), which eventually lead to criminal behaviour.

Colleen Berryessa, a criminologist, stated that a 2014 Korean report on monozygotic twins with paedophilia concluded that genetic influences appeared to be more important to the causes and development of paedophilia than environmental factors, including childhood abuse.

But there seems to be little or no agreement about what conclusively makes an individual a paedophile.

Experts also believe that there is no permanent cure for paedophilia; some claim therapy treatment can work but it's a challenge. Since pae-

tigation capabilities by trained specialists.

Huckle operated a website called The Love Zone (TLZ) on the Dark Web, a hidden network used to maintain anonymity. His site consisted of photos of the children he abused that he shared with other members. The Dark Web is accessible only with specialised software.

To make it more complicated, cyber-criminals often use encryption to protect their malicious data and communications.

There should also be increased focus on proper enforcement and skill level in conducting cyber-crime investigations in order to reduce the use of the Dark Web in committing child sex activities.

than those proven to be trustworthy and reliable.

Certainly do not assume that a person is reliable because of position, status or title or because the work in a place where children commonly gather.

At this point, our country still does not have a central registry for child abusers and paedophiles.

The data is very important as it would contain the particulars of sex offenders, allowing law enforcement agencies to keep track and monitor child sex activities in our community. We need to protect our children.

**The writer is** a criminologist, Institute of Crime and Criminology, HELP University