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PM: Stop sex crimes against children

KUALA LUMPUR — A comprehensive approach towards curbing the heinous crimes of child sex is underway and Malaysians from across the board have been called to come together in tackling this menace.

At the ongoing Parliament session, a new Bill will be tabled to address child sex crimes and the formation of a federal task force to oversee the establishment of a special criminal court to preside over such cases.

"The Crime Sexual Offences Bill 2017 will be tabled and all MPs should support it because it's the responsibility of all concerned," said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak when addressing more than 1,800 participants and speakers at the Permata-organised "Child Sex Crimes: Stop!" at Putra World Trade Centre yesterday.

"The Bill should not be opposed by any political party. These are

17-member delegation from the republic for the two-day seminar. She is scheduled to address the participants today.

Najib reminded adults, especially parents, they had a key role to play in tackling the menace of child sex crimes.

"Parents need to open their eyes and protect their children from sexual predators," he said.

This scourge of child sex crimes, he said, seemed to be a taboo subject among the community.

"This is why public awareness remains lacking over such incidents. With this seminar by experts it should open the eyes of Malaysians on how to better protect children.

"The public is more than happy to push some of the responsibilities to protect children under the supervision of parents as guardians rather than be responsible for the community together, as a whole," he said.

TEKNIK 'YRT'

YELL, RUN & TELL

JERIT, LARI & CERITA

...ary political party. These are children below 18... it should not happen to them. We must not allow a child to be exploited by sexual predators. The government would not tolerate sexual exploitation and abuse of children and would strive to eliminate these heinous crimes."

The task force would be headed by Minister in Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said and will comprise officials from the Attorney-General's Chambers, Bar Council, elected representatives, academicians, non-governmental organisations which oversee child welfare and related ministries including the Women, Family and Community Development Ministry.

Permata is the organisation which advocates the welfare of children with the objective of providing a platform to unearth potentials and encourage talent.

Also present were Najib's wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor who is Permata programme patron, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi; Communications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Seri Salleh Said Keruak and Woman, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Rohani Abdul Karim.

Indonesia's former president Megawati Soekarnoputri, who is a specially invited guest, led a

he said
"The seminar, I hope will open the subject for an inclusive and intelligent debate to address a very concerning issue."

Sexual crimes is one of the cruellest and inhumane act as it will scar victims for life and should not be tolerated, said Najib

"We absolutely will not tolerate any act of exploiting and abusing children sexually.

"Compared with other types of abuse, sexual crimes against children can be considered as one of the worst forms of cruelty, because it can affect a child, and haunt their lives into adulthood," he said.

Najib lamented that child sex crimes were happening in this day and time.

"I feel sad and disappointed because there are people who can be called a paedophile or paedophilia, which refers to those with mental health problems and sexually attracted to children," he said.

"They victimise the innocent, as has happened in cases involving citizens of the UK, namely Richard Huckle, who was found guilty of child molestation in Malaysia.

"We are now faced with a daunting challenge in identifying these people, who we consider to be wolves in sheep clothing, blending with society."



**Rosmah
(right)
accompanies
Megawati
to launch
the seminar
yesterday.**



Predators beat the law as victims ashamed to report

KUALA LUMPUR — Sexual predators who prey on children escape punishment as victims fail to lodge reports fearing shame.

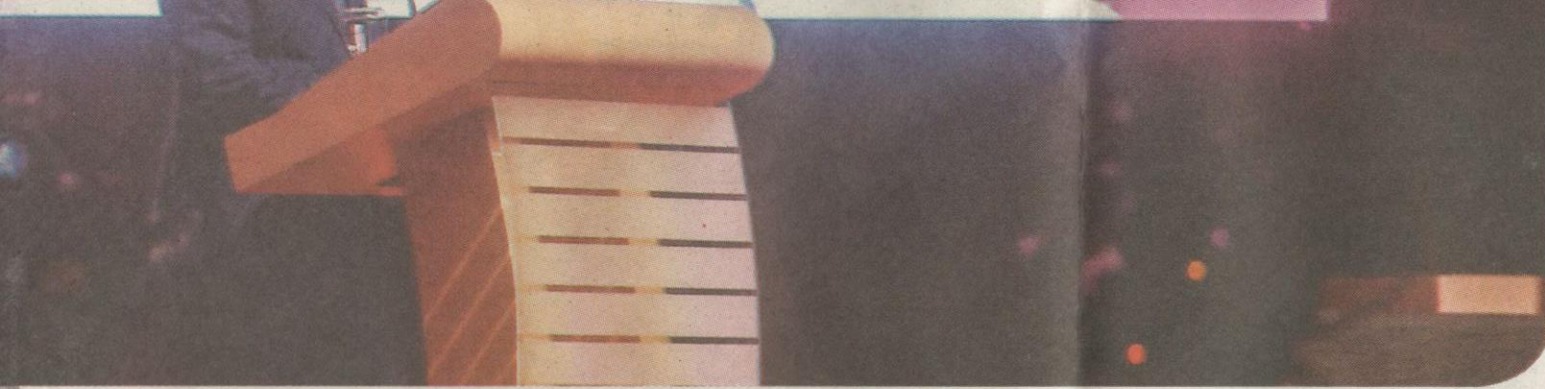
“Children are ashamed as to what has happened to them and police reports are not lodged. This simply means those guilty cannot be charged in court,” Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Rohani Abdul Karim said.

Expressing concern over the situation, which she described as worrying, Rohani said there was nothing authorities could do about it.

“Many are ashamed and will not lodge a report ... there is nothing we can do,” she said.

“This worries me because this (what we know) is merely the tip of the iceberg. Only a small number of cases are reported.”

Rohani was speaking to reporters after acting as a moderator for a panel discussion on “Understanding Children Sexual Crimes — the International Perspective” at a two-day seminar on child sexual crimes at Putra World Trade Centre yesterday.



Najib addresses the seminar participants and speakers as the image of a solemn looking child is displayed. — Pictures by Firdaus Latif

'Protection of children needs high-level commitment'

KUALA LUMPUR — Malaysians from all walks of life must view the issue of sexual crimes involving children in a serious manner and find means to help address the issue, said Permata programmes patron Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor.

"It is time Malaysians along with the government work together for the sake of our future generations," Rosmah, who is also the wife of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, said.

"We should not act only after such crimes occur within our families for us to learn the severity of such offences. Many do not know the full implications or effect of such crimes on the victims," she said

during her opening remarks at the seminar "Child Sex Crimes: Stop!" at Putra World Trade Centre yesterday.

"Now is the time for us to come together and fight against such crimes before it is too late," adding that said such an endeavour required a high-level of commitment from the public.

According to Rosmah, many sexual crimes go unreported to protect the good name of the families involved.

"This proves that children, either boy or girl, are exposed to sexual abuse," she said, adding that children should be protected at all times to ensure future development.

Sex offences (2015-2016)

2,759 — Rape
1,423 — Molest
422 — Unnatural sex
(children under 18)
412 — Incest

Source: Royal Malaysia Police

2010-2016

5,779 child
sexual abuse
cases, with an
average **963**
cases each year.

Source: Social Welfare
Department

She said the ministry, through the National Population and Family Development Board, had organised various programmes to educate the public on sexual education.

"We meet the people and tell them to lodge police reports. Through 'Pekerti' programmes, we educate children that they should be brave and share information on sexual crimes," she said.

Rohani said there must be early emphasis on sexual education so that children were aware of sexual assault.

"We do not want the perpetrators to tell the children that there is nothing wrong (in their actions), that it is fun, among others. This should be prevented," Bernama quoted her saying.

Federal police Sexual, Women and Children Division investigation officer Deputy Superintendent E. Saroja said among the challenges faced by the division was getting information from victims as they were too young and could not understand the questions.

"To resolve this, we use various techniques when approaching them to make them feel comfortable with us, including wearing civilian clothes and using counsellors," she said.

Saroja said last year, there were 7,862 reported sexual crime cases involving children including rape, incest and unnatural sex.

She said in 89 per cent of the cases, the perpetrators were known to the victims.