



EDITOR, NEWS DESK

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STRONGER SENTENCE NEEDED FOR CHILD ABUSE OFFENDERS

KUALA LUMPUR (12 NOVEMBER 2024) - The Children's Commissioner (CC) of the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia is appalled at the recent news revealing that a young mother and her two friends were only sentenced to 14 days' imprisonment and fined RM10,000 each by the Sessions Court for committing child abuse against the young mother's 3-year-old son.

The inadequacy of the sentence - 14 days out of the 20-year maximum imprisonment term stipulated under Section 31 of the Child Act 2001 for an offence that has become a matter of public interest - is profoundly inadequate and fails to convey society's abhorrence for such acts. While acknowledging that the mother is a youthful offender, the aims of retribution and deterrence in sentencing must be upheld, especially when the offence is serious and targets a defenceless victim.

Reports indicate that the child was confined in a cage by the three offenders, as the mother claimed she needed to go to work. The child was also allegedly kicked by the mother's two friends while the mother looked on. The boy was found to have sustained injuries to his abdomen, eyebrows, limbs, and back.

The CC believes that this abuse was inhumane and calls on the Deputy Public Prosecutor (DPP) to file a Notice of Appeal immediately to send a clear message that child abuse is intolerable. The CC also urges the relevant authorities to follow up on the welfare of the child to ensure his best interests are safeguarded. The CC recommends that the child be placed with a foster family familiar to him and that the mother undergo at least six months of counselling to address her inability to provide appropriate care for her son.

The CC would like to remind every stakeholder involved in children's welfare of the words of the judges in the Court of Appeal case DPP vs. Asmarani bt Ghazali: "When dealing with children, there can be no room for error or failure. Children are vulnerable and defenceless and require society and the law to safeguard their interests, which must not be disregarded or compromised due to mistakes or misjudgments by adults."

-END-

Dr Farah Nini Dusuki

Children's Commissioner

The Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)

12 November 2024