

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT 1994

# MORE TO BE PROTECTED UNDER ACT

It addresses wider issues of domestic violence, says minister

NOR AIN MOHAMED RADHI  
KUALA LUMPUR  
news@nst.com.my

**H**USBANDS, children and even in-laws will be included in the Domestic Violence Act 1994 amendment to be tabled for first reading in Parliament today.

Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Rohani Abdul Karim said the bill sought to address wider issues of domestic violence as well as to provide justice.

"The amendment will not only apply to wives, but also husbands and family members, including in-laws.

"Domestic violence is not just about physical abuse, which leaves physical evidence, or emo-



Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Rohani Abdul Karim (third from left) visiting a booth at the Malaysia Tourism Centre in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. PIC BY ZULFADHLI ZULKIFLI

tional abuse. It can be much deeper, what we called 'psychosocial' abuse, for example, divorce via the WhatsApp app and theft of pension card.

"We will discuss it in detail tomorrow (today), but we hope that

the bill will reduce the number of domestic abuse cases," she said after the "Bridge to A Better Life" programme at the Malaysia Tourism Centre here yesterday.

Women's Aid Organisation advocacy manager Yu Ren Chung

said the amendment would strengthen the protection mechanism for victims.

"We have been working with the ministry and other parties related to domestic violence for the past three years. So, we are hap-

py to finally see the bill tabled."

He said the amendment would also see improvement to the Interim Protection Order (IPO).

"The existing IPO is not strong enough to prevent violence during investigation, but with the amendment, one cannot be near the victim's house or office."

He said an Emergency Protection Order was also expected to be introduced, which could be issued faster than the IPO.

Meanwhile, individuals, including family members who have knowledge of sexual crimes against children, will be deemed as accomplices and can be charged under the Sexual Offences against Children Bill 2017, which will be tabled in Parliament for second reading today.

"According to reports, 80 per cent of child sexual crime cases were committed by persons known to the victim. In fact, such crimes were committed in front of family members," Rohani said.

"Many such cases remain unsolved as witnesses refuse to cooperate with the authorities."