

EMERGENCY PROTECTION ORDER

# PROTECTING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS

Bill to empower welfare officers to immediately protect victims of violence

PUTRAJAYA

SOME 1,600 Welfare Department (JKM) officers will be empowered to issue an Emergency Protection Order (EPO) to provide immediate protection to victims of domestic violence.

Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Rohani Abdul Karim said it was among five reforms included in the Domestic Violence (Amendment) Bill 2017, expected to be tabled for the second and third readings in the Dewan Rakyat at the next

Parliamentary sitting.

Through the amendment, she said, authorised officers would be empowered by the JKM director-general to issue temporary ex parte orders effective for one week to protect domestic violence victims during a state of emergency.

“Currently all JKM officers are in the midst or have undergone the relevant course. The ministry wants all JKM officers in the field to be well-trained,” she said at a briefing session on the Domestic Violence (Amendment) Bill 2017 here yesterday.

She said the EPO would provide protection to domestic violence victims by preventing the perpetrator from hurting the victim, inciting others to commit domestic violence, or from entering a safe place, shelter, residence, joint residence or alternative residence.

Rohani said the amendment



Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Rohani Abdul Karim shows the Domestic Violence (Amendment) Bill 2017 at her ministry in Putrajaya. PIC BY ZUNNUR AL SHAFIQ

aimed to beef up protection for victims and restore the family institution.

At present, victims can only obtain interim protection orders (IPO) and protection orders from the court, but many complaints of domestic violence occur on weekends, when they cannot get

such orders immediately due to court not being in session.

She said the EPO was effective for a period of one week, and if the perpetrator committed violence against the protected person, he could be liable to a fine of RM4,000, or jail of not more than one year, or both.

Action can also be taken against those found to have given false evidence under Section 181 of the Penal Code.

Rohani said victims of domestic violence could get the EPO directly from the department's offices, or contact the 24-hour Nur line. **Bernama**