



Ministry of Women,
Family and Community Development

PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FAILING OUR CHILDREN?

The Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development would like to refer to the New Sunday Times report on the above mentioned matter published on the front page on 15 February 2015.

Preamble of the Child Act 2001 stated that family is the fundamental institution in society which provides the natural environment for the growth, support and well-being of the child. A family environment will enable the children to develop in an environment of peace, happiness, love and understanding in order to attain the full confidence, dignity and worth as a human. Hence, separating children from their family is the last choice unless it is unavoidable as it might harm them if there are not separated from their family.

Therefore, in addressing the issue of violence against children, key measures taken by the Ministry include providing accessible and child-sensitive counselling services and to put in place effective complaint and reporting mechanisms. Direct access by the public to the ministry on child abuse or negligence issues are essential as children are living in the communities and most of the time the perpetrator will keep away their wrong doing from the public. Apart from that, the responsibility to provide a secure and safe environment for the child lies with the parents as well as the community and neighbourhood.

Toll free line known as *Talian NUR* 15999 was established in 2005 with the aim of encouraging members of the public to report child neglect and abuse cases directly to the Department of Social Welfare for immediate action. Once the public lodges a report, the gazette protectors will investigate, evaluate and take appropriate actions with the child's best interest in mind. In addition, the Ministry has collaborated with Childline Malaysia to incorporate Child Care Line services into *Talian NUR* 15999 on 13 November 2010. The operators for the Childline are specially trained to handle calls from children.

However, during a visit to *Talian Nur* in 2013, the present Minister of Women, Family and Community Development had instructed the termination of contract of the management and daily operation of *Talian Nur*. She directed the officers from Department of Social Welfare to immediately taking over the operation of *Talian Nur*, to be more effective in handling the issue especially on child abuse.

The Ministry would like to reiterate that the efforts to provide care and protection of children requires the close cooperation of the vigilant public to immediately report such cases. A community-based approach will ensure the children are constantly being monitored and cared for.

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