

Civil and Syariah laws should be reviewed to prevent child marriage, says Azizah

KOTA KINABALU: The civil and syariah laws in the country should be reviewed to allow for a stricter regulations on child marriage, Deputy Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Azizah Mohd Dun.

She said the review was necessary to prevent quarters from taking advantage of the loop holes in the law, including the syariah laws which allowed child marriage if it met the stipulated conditions.

"We'll get the views of various quarters, including civil and syariah legal experts, on whether there is a need to formulate a new law or improve the existing laws," she told reporters at a thanksgiving ceremony at her residence in Likas near here Friday.

Azizah was commenting on a recent Sessions Court case where a 40-year-old man charged with raping an under-age girl married the victim, who is almost 13 years old, according to syariah laws.

She said any child in such a situation should be protected and did not rule out child marriage as one of the reasons for the high number of young single mothers, especially in the rural areas in Sabah.

"Most of them married at a young age. They have no permanent job, so they cannot support their families. The husbands go to the towns to look for job and leave their wives behind. After sometime, they forget their wives and children back home," she added.

She said programmes would be carried out to create awareness among the public on problems facing couples who married at a young age. Bernama

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