



**SISTERS IN ISLAM**  
**(SIS Forum Malaysia) (Co. No. 266561W)**

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**PRESS STATEMENT**  
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**SISTERS IN ISLAM CONDEMNS CANING OF  
THREE MUSLIM WOMEN UNDER SYARIAH LAW**

Sisters in Islam (SIS) is shocked that the Prisons Department has caned three Muslim women for shariah offences.

Given that several issues on shariah and constitutional grounds, sentencing guidelines and Malaysia's commitments to international human rights instruments that were raised on the Kartika case remain unresolved, we question the government's motive in proceeding with the caning of Muslim women.

And to do this surreptitiously implies that the government wanted to hide this degrading and unjust treatment from public scrutiny. We would also like to know the fate of the 4 men that were also sentenced as reported in the media.

We urge the Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil to take immediate steps to address the several unresolved issues arising from the caning sentence carried out on these women and the Kartika case.

This case constitutes further discrimination against Muslim women in Malaysia. It violates Constitutional guarantees of equality and non-discrimination as whipping of women under Shariah Criminal Offences legislation contradicts civil law where women are not punishable by caning under Section 289 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

Corporal punishments were common forms of punishments in many ancient and medieval societies, regardless of their religious faiths, both in the East and the West. Therefore, the fact that corporal punishments were also carried out in medieval Muslim societies does not mean that such punishments are especially "Islamic" in nature. In contemporary society, to enforce such punishments is merely to retain pre-Islamic understanding of justice and punishment in law.

We once again urge the government to review caning as a form of punishment as it violates international human rights principles which regard whipping and other forms of corporal punishment as cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. Moreover, research has shown that caning is not an effective deterrent, even to violent or sexual crimes.

**Dr Hamidah Marican**  
**Executive Director**  
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