

## Malaysia parliament bans sexist remarks

2012-11-27 14:05

Kuala Lumpur - Malaysian lawmakers on Tuesday approved a ban on sexist remarks in parliament after a number of cases in which male MPs in the mostly Muslim country have drawn anger with their comments on the floor.

The amendment to the rules of conduct in the Dewan Rakyat, or lower house of parliament, bars lawmakers from making "a sexist remark", opposition lawmaker Fong Po Kuan said, with violators facing a reprimand or even suspension.

"It's good that it's provided expressly now so all MPs take it seriously," she said. "It's unacceptable. No circumstances can justify sexist comments."

Several Malaysian MPs have sparked controversy in the past with comments in parliament viewed as insulting to women.

In 2007, Fong was the target of remark that referred to her menstrual cycle when ruling coalition MP Bung Mohktar said during a discussion on a leaking parliament roof: "Where is the leak? The Batu Gajah MP also leaks every month."

Fong described the amendment as a "good move" but added that the speaker, who determines which comments are inappropriate, must be "gender-sensitive and impartial".

### Enough is enough

She suggested a gender-sensitivity training course for all members of parliament.

De facto law minister Nazri Aziz was quoted by The Star daily as saying the change aimed to stop sexist remarks "once and for all".



Malaysia Prime Minister Najib Razak at Parliament House in Kuala Lumpur. (File, AFP)

[Multimedia](#) · [User Galleries](#) · [News in Pictures](#)  
[Send us your pictures](#) · [Send us your stories](#)

### Related Links

- [Malaysia launches women-only taxis](#)
- [Police slammed for branding women](#)
- [We deserved caning, say women](#)
- [Malaysia to ban Muslim women's sex book](#)

"Lately, there have been a lot of such incidents. We want to put a brake on it... This is to safeguard the honour of women," she said.

In 2011, an opposition lawmaker reportedly blamed wives for unfaithful husbands, saying: "When the husband has the need and she's cooking, she'll say, 'Please hold on, I'm cooking.' From a Muslim perspective, the wife has to drop all of this. She must give priority to her husband's needs."

Samy Vellu, a former lawmaker and long-time president of the Malaysian Indian Congress, which is part of the ruling coalition, reportedly once said: "Toilets are like new brides after they are completed. After some time, they get a bit spoiled. Even if you do not use them frequently, you need someone to clean them every 25 minutes."

Opposition lawmaker Nurul Izzah Anwar, opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim's daughter, said in a statement on Tuesday that more should be done to help women lawmakers, such as setting up a crèche in parliament.

- AFP