

## Frequency and brutality of rapes alarming

Written by straits-mongrel  
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ALL Women's Action Society ( [Awam](#) ) is horrified by a report in [The Star](#) of a serial rapist who repeatedly assaulted six secondary school students over one year and used the mobile phone recordings of the rapes as threats. This comes barely a few weeks after shocking reports of the [gang rape](#) of a 14-year-old student in a school in Rawang by seven classmates.

The increasing frequency and brutality of rapes and other sex crimes is alarming. According to statistics, the number of reported rape cases since 2000 has tripled to 3,626 in 2009, doubling within the last five years alone. These do not include other forms of sexual assault such as incest.

Using these figures, and accounting for the under-reporting (only one in 10 cases of rape is reported), it is possible to surmise that in Malaysia, approximately one person is raped every 15 minutes.

These two cases also expose a frightening pattern: young girls and teenagers are the primary victims of sex crimes. In 2009, all reported rape victims were girls under 18 years of age. Of these, more than half were below 16. These show that the young are disproportionately vulnerable to rape and other forms of sexual assault.

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The use of mobile phones and other devices is also frequently being abused for sexual exploitation.

We admire and commend the young survivors in these cases for having the courage to speak out on the assaults despite the fear of retaliation. These acts of bravery have directly resulted in the perpetrators being caught by the police.

If only entire communities and institutions would also follow suit. In the case of the Rawang gang rape, the entire community and school kept silent, allowing the violations, assaults and crimes to continue. According to Rawang assemblyperson [Gan Pei Nei](#) , no one came forward to file a complaint.

Worse, there are serious allegations that the Rawang school has been covering up cases of assault. These claims must be investigated, and if found guilty, the institution is complicit in the crimes and must be held accountable.

As the sites of these rapes were within and surrounding the schools, the institutions must be held responsible for the safety and well-being of the students under their care. Otherwise, justice will yet again not be served.

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**8 June 2010**