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Ragging and bullying cases not to be taken lightly; enact anti-bullying laws, govt told

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A lawyer and activist have urged the government to promptly enact anti-bullying laws, given the increasing number of cases among students, especially those in boarding schools. - NSTP file pic, for illustration purposes only

KUALA LUMPUR: A lawyer and activist have urged the government to promptly enact anti-bullying laws, given the increasing number of cases among students, especially those in boarding schools.

Anti Bullying Act Campaign head Wan Azliana Wan Adnan said it is timely for Malaysia to establish specific legislation because there is currently no provision offering a comprehensive definition and interpretation of bullying.

"Ragging and bullying cases should not be taken lightly because they have adverse physical, psychological, and emotional effects on the victims.

"It is crucial for all parties to realise that bullying is a crime that can harm the victims to the extent of costing lives.

"Bullying should no longer be seen solely as a disciplinary issue but as a serious, widespread crime. Thus, an anti-bullying law is still needed to improve and strengthen the existing laws," she said in a statement today.

As of today, the only education-related laws enforced in Malaysia include the Penal Code, the 1957 Education Ordinance and the 1959 School Discipline Regulations.

Previously, screenshots of a social media post by a woman believed to be the victim's sister went viral on social media.

In addition to sharing her brother's ordeal, the woman expressed her frustration over the 'light punishment' received by the students who allegedly assaulted her brother.

The woman claimed that the students who assaulted her brother only received between two and three strokes of the rotan.

Wan Azliana said there is a need for cooperation among relevant stakeholders, including school administrators, parents, Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA), and the ministry to address such issues.

"Students need to be educated and made aware of the bullying crime. They need to understand that bullying is a criminal act, not just a disciplinary problem.

"Punishments that serve as both a lesson and a deterrent should be implemented to send the message that bullying will not be tolerated.