

Malaysia: Telenisa: Muslim husbands not giving enough money a top concern at 50pc, 2022 findings show

Saturday 19 August 2023, by [LIM Ida](#) (Date first published: 23 July 2023).

KUALA LUMPUR, July 23 — As the Covid-19 pandemic was coming to an end, Muslim women in Malaysia remained highly concerned about financial issues, especially about their husbands not giving enough money to pay for the family's expenses, a 2022 report shows.

In the 2022 findings by non-governmental organisation Sisters in Islam (SIS), 431 persons had last year used its free legal aid service Telenisa for Islamic family law issues (387 or 90 per cent being women, 44 men).

"Inquiries about maintenance claims rose even towards the end of the Covid-19 pandemic, with 66 per cent of Telenisa's clients seeking guidance on the procedures to make a maintenance claim," SIS said on its *Telenisa Statistics and Findings 2022* report released yesterday.

Of these 66 per cent, 47 per cent were those who had never made or filed any claim for maintenance at the Shariah court, while 13 per cent were wives who were asking about arrears of maintenance as their husbands did not give such funds despite being ordered to by the court to pay maintenance, and 6 per cent were asking about "iddah maintenance" which is a type of maintenance that Muslim men have to pay the former wife during the iddah period caused by divorce.

But specifically on the cases involving wives' maintenance recorded by SIS through its Telenisa service, the proportion of cases involving Muslim husbands not giving enough maintenance dropped from 76 per cent in 2021 to 50 per cent in 2022.

"Up to 50 per cent of our clients revealed that their husband did not provide enough maintenance, yet were expecting the wives to manage the household with however little they are given," SIS said in its 2022 report.

SIS manager of advocacy, legal services and research Fadhlul Adnin Abd Karim yesterday shared anecdotes on the type of amount that Muslim men were giving for their families' financial support.

"Most of our clients complained that their husbands only give RM100, RM200 a month. Imagine, is that enough in Kuala Lumpur, RM100, RM200 a month? Doesn't make sense right?" she said at the launch of the 2022 report and at the celebration of Telenisa's 20th year anniversary here.

In the 2022 report, SIS also found that the maintenance cases involving unemployed husbands rose from 10 per cent in 2021 to 28 per cent in 2022, which it attributed to causing a rise in cases of husbands not providing maintenance at all (up from 1 per cent in 2021 to 3 per cent in 2022).

For cases involving husbands remaining unemployed, the family would face difficulties in paying for

basic needs such as food, utilities and house rent, causing wives — if they are not working — having to dip into their own savings to cover the household’s daily expenses. Also for situations where the husband never gave any maintenance, the wife has to bear the household expenses all on her own.

There were also 11 per cent of women both in 2021 and 2022 whose husbands disobeyed court orders to pay maintenance and child support.

Of the maintenance cases, 2 per cent in 2021 and 8 per cent in 2022 were other issues, such as when the husband only provides money for expenses once every three months, with SIS saying that this is because such husbands know that their wife can apply for divorce if they fail to pay maintenance for more than three consecutive months.

“There are also situations where a client complained that her husband would pay utility bills only after receiving the final notice,” SIS said, adding that maintenance under Islam goes beyond just basic needs and that it also covers the provision of education, medicine and personal care products such as cosmetics and hygiene products.

Separately, SIS also found that 311 children were affected in 2022 due to parental issues which could not be resolved, with 52 per cent of their issues revolving around child maintenance (42 per cent on maintenance and 10 per cent involving arrears on maintenance).

The top issue on child maintenance in 2022 among Telenisa clients were fathers not giving enough financial support at 49 per cent, followed by unemployed fathers (29 per cent), fathers violating court orders to pay money to support the child’s financial needs (14 per cent), while two per cent involve fathers who do not provide any maintenance.

SIS said the issue of unresolved maintenance will directly affect the family’s economy and daily lives.

“Hence, Telenisa emphasises the urgent need for the government to embark on a long-term study to understand the consequences of insufficient maintenance on families and what are the policies necessary to be in place and implemented to get them out from the cycle of poverty,” SIS said.

SIS also proposed the introduction of policy initiatives at the grassroots and community levels to address social issues and economic hardships.

According to SIS, its free legal aid service Telenisa can be reached at 012-812 3424 from Monday to Friday from 10am to 5pm via phone calls, video calls and WhatsApp, with face-to-face consultations available by making appointments.

Ida Lim

[Click here](#) to subscribe to ESSF newsletters in English and/or French.

P.S.

Malay Mail

<https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2023/07/22/telenisa-muslim-husbands-not-giving-enough-money-a-top-concern-at-50pc-2022-findings-show/81148>