

# Shun taboo call to rape victims

By BASMA MOHAMMED

RAPE victims are failing to come forward because the crime is not being taken seriously in Bahrain, it has been claimed.

Many relatives also reportedly prevent their loved ones from going to the authorities to protect the honour of their family.

Experts now want convicted sex attackers to be named and shamed as part of efforts to reduce attacks on women.

It comes after a man, understood to be Bahraini, was jailed for only a week for raping his housemaid in front of his children.

Migrant Workers Protection Society (MWPS) chairwoman Marietta Dias stressed although such cases are few and far between, many housemaids were victims of rape.

She says they are often unable to file complaints

because their employers do not allow them out of the house and withhold their passports and CPRs.



■ Ms Dias

"There are a few rape cases that are on record," Ms Dias told the GDN.

"But surely, many incidents are not reported as house-

maids are unable to leave their homes or do not have their CPRs to file the case.

"Seventy per cent of housemaids and labourers do not have possession of their CPRs."

Ms Dias called for convicted rapists to be named and shamed and for punishments strong enough to deter them from doing the crime again.

"Victims should be compensated for the sake of helping them emotionally," she said.

"The laws are good on paper, but it needs to be implemented strongly.

"When a case is filed, an investigation should be followed through and strict punishment must be given for the rapist if proven guilty.

"But if not, then the maid can be punished."



■ Dr Al Deerazi

National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR) vice-chairman Dr Abdulla Al Deerazi revealed Bahrain's criminal procedures were not strict in comparison to the US and Europe.

"Rapists there can get a life sentence as rape is seen as a social and criminal problem," he said.

"A crime is a crime and needs to be looked at seriously."

Dr Al Deerazi said there was also a need for a support system for victims to deal with the psychological and physical aftermath of attacks.

"In our part of the world,

women are sometimes blamed if they get raped," he said.

The Justice and Islamic Affairs Ministry declined to provide statistics when contacted, but around 20 rape and sexual harassment cases have been reported by the GDN since beginning of the year.

Criminal lawyer Abdulrahman Al Ghunaim believes Bahrain's laws are strong enough and a lack of reporting is a

key problem.

"Around five rape cases are recorded yearly, but sexual assaults are more common," he said.

"Some cases are dropped in courts by the family mostly.

"The problem is lack of reporting such cases.

"Bahrain is a conservative society which looks to save face so percentages are not accurate."

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## November date set for blast case verdict

A VERDICT will be handed down in the trial of five men accused of detonating a bomb outside a Riffa mosque in November.

Prosecution witnesses were supposed to give evidence at the High Criminal Court, but judges will issue a ruling on November 10 after three defendants in custody failed to show up in court.

The men are boycotting court hearings from their jail cell, while two others still at large are being tried in absentia.

Defence lawyers told judges the defendants had asked them not to represent their clients anymore.

The Bahrainis have been charged with detonating and possessing an explosive device, establishing an illicit group with the aim of crippling establishments and stealing two cars.

Prosecutors earlier claimed the suspects had established a terrorist group in Bahrain and blew up a car in the parking area a mosque in Riffa, on July 17 as worshippers were performing special evening prayers.



■ The band performing on stage

## Celtic Tenors concert treat

A LIVE concert by the Celtic Tenors wowed diners at Upstairs Downstairs Restaurant in Adliya.

The Irishmen, who have

achieved Top 10 spots in both the US Billboard and Canadian charts, have also previously performed to sell-out crowds at the venue.

They have also given private performances to world leaders such as Bill Clinton and former United Nations chief Kofi Annan.

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