

 KUALA LUMPUR: Foreign wives of Malaysians will be accorded the same protection against domestic violence as locals, said Deputy Women, Family, and Community Development Minister Senator Heng Seai Kie.

Heng said the women deserved acknowledgement for their sacrifices in leaving their home country to bring up their children and to bring happiness to their husbands.

She added that the country was obliged to protect the women who may apply for Malaysian citizenship after their marriage.

◆ We will help all who need to be helped regardless of their citizenship status, she said.

◆ The country must help these wives to assimilate into their new home and offer them full protection as it is also their right, Heng told reporters after a two-hour closed-door meeting with 30 members of the Formosa Women Organisation of Malaysia here yesterday.

Formosa, represented by chairman Datin Fang Shu Hua, consists of about 200 women of Taiwanese descent married to Malaysians.

Heng said the group expressed concern over domestic violence and citizenship application.

Police statistics revealed a reduction in the number of reports in domestic violence last year, from 3,643 cases to 3,173.

Of these cases, 1,660 were reported in Malay families, 707 Indian, 405 Chinese and 413 for other races.

Heng said the cases listed under other races also included reports by foreign wives, although she could not confirm the exact figure.

◆ Nationalities aside, the main cause for domestic violence last year was misunderstanding between husband and wife, which resulted from a lack in communication, a sense of distrust in the other party and a stressful lifestyle, Heng said.