

Joint Statement on Yau Ma Tei Murder-Suicide Case

Association for Concern for Legal Rights of Victims of Domestic Violence

A murder-suicide case has shocked Hong Kong last week. On Monday, 4 September 2017, a man allegedly [killed](#) his wife at a luxury apartment building in Yau Ma Tei before taking his own life. The police said the husband had moved out of their home on Friday after the wife discovered he had been cheating and demanded a divorce.

Domestic violence in the city remains one of Hong Kong's most neglected problems and unfortunately, also its most hidden. Yet, the media coverage of the murder-suicide case highlights a critical lack of understanding about the issue. As the horrific news about the young couple, who were both civil servants, gripped the city, reports speculated that the act of violence was the inevitable consequence of the wife earning a higher salary than the husband.

The [front-page story](#) of Headline Daily on Tuesday, 5 September 2017, was titled: "Wife's salary is more than double her husband's. Wife in a higher position is a recipe for a tragedy." News website HK01.com also linked the murder-suicide to the wife's high salary. In a [story](#) published on 4 September, it quoted Szeto Hon-ming, a senior social worker, who said a wife shouldn't "injure the pride" of the husband. He also advised wives who earned more than their husband not to use "terms that may undermine men's self-esteem."

Media ethics exact a higher standard of reporting than what is sadly on display from the headlines and stories which have emerged over the course of the week. The reports have irresponsibly showcased and perpetuated a sexist narrative which blames the victim.

Although the homicide rate in Hong Kong remains comparatively low given the size of our population, the number of domestic murder-suicides among homicides features prominently. This is no cause for comfort but rather, calls for targeted approaches for prevention by frontline personnel who need to understand that such incidents are often the breaking point in a relationship likely to have been peppered by escalating violence earlier on. The majority of the victims are women, and the perpetrators are usually their partners or former partners. Hong Kong — along with Japan — has [the highest rate](#) of [female homicide victims](#) in the world: women comprise 52.9% of the total homicide victims in these two jurisdictions, followed by South Korea at 52.5%.

Research shows that women are at a heightened risk of becoming victims of violence during periods of conflict in their relationship, particularly when they try to end their relationship. In a separate case also on Monday last week, a woman was [raped](#) by her estranged husband and his friend at her home in Sha Tin after she refused to reconcile with him.

Domestic homicide, murder-suicide cases and other forms of intimate partner violence don't happen in a vacuum. Multiple incidents of abuse occur before a woman is killed or harmed and before such instances come fully to light. Leaving a relationship is the most dangerous time for domestic violence victims.

To lay blame on victims and labelling them as a “scorned wife” or “cold” for refusing to reconcile with a partner perpetuates patriarchy at the heart of which lies gender inequality and oppression. It is high time that Hong Kong acknowledges this reality as the root cause of violence against women.

The media have the responsibility to report stories about violence against women in a manner that is fair and facilitates the public's proper understanding of the issue and educates them on the complexities of such occurrences. As Mary Barry, chief executive of Our Watch, an Australian non-profit, recently [said](#), “There is a clear link between media reporting and community attitudes towards violence against women.”

Apart from journalists, we also call on those who work in the front line, from social workers to healthcare professionals to police, to have a deeper understanding about violence against women. This warrants regular, up-to-date training and development of skills to effectively handle complaints of violence and in particular, to offer follow-up services to prevent retaliation or escalation in the future. Sadly, these continue to be sorely lacking at this moment.

聲明：有關油麻地「御金·國峯」夫婦兇殺及自殺命案

關注家庭暴力受害人法權會

[最近一宗夫婦兇殺及自殺命案](#)震驚全城。事發於九月四日，跟據警方推測，一名男子在油麻地「御金·國峯」以刀重創妻子後把她推下樓，然後再跳樓自殺。女死者頸、背、手多處有刀傷。跟據報導，男死者於上周五被妻子發現有婚外情後，妻子提出離婚，之後男方搬離住所。然而，男方於當日清晨返家，其間與妻子就感情問題爭執，隨後發生墮樓雙亡事件。

在香港，家庭暴力問題一直是一個被忽略而隱蔽的社會問題，媒體對這宗兇殺及自殺命案的報導方向亦反映其對家暴問題缺乏理解。此震驚全城的案件牽涉同是公務員的年青夫婦，對此媒體大肆推測慘案的成因，並將家庭暴力歸咎於妻子收入高於丈夫。

[頭條新聞的頭版標題為](#)「妻月薪多夫一倍，女尊男卑，悲劇伏線」；香港 01 同樣是將慘案歸咎於妻子高薪所致。香港 01 在星期一的跟進報導中，更引述資深家庭服務社工司徒漢明所說：「作為妻子，應明白社會存在中國人傳統觀念，了解男性有自尊心，對話時要避用一些字眼，吵架時忌用侮辱、中傷、狠辣、惡毒的字眼，在男性傷口上灑鹽，太太要好小留意相處的避忌之處，當有外人話老公不是，要讚返老公托住佢。」

就此案的相關報導，明顯未達媒體的專業道德標準。有個別媒體的報導甚至是極之不負社會責任。而評論此案的家庭服務專業人士亦在評論中滲入了性別歧視及咎罪於受害人的觀點，再次強化男尊女卑的觀念。

雖然，相對香港的人口比例，本港的兇殺案數字相當低，但謀殺及自殺案卻是發生在家庭內的兇殺案中最明顯的類別。這數字不但令人不安，更提醒前線的工作人員，不少發生在家中的兇殺案是原於關係破裂時，暴力昇級所致。大部份的受害人是女性，而行兇者通常是她們的伴侶或前伴侶。令人關注的是，香港的情況與日本看齊，成為全球兇殺案[女受害人](#)比例最高的地方之一，在所有兇殺案中，女受害人佔 52.9%，而緊隨的是南韓 52.5%

調查研究顯示，在伴侶衝突的時候，女性通常是較高危的一方。不少女性因為決定結束一段親密關係而成為家暴的受害人。本星期另一發生在沙田的案件中，一名女性因為她[拒絕復合](#)被丈夫及其朋友強姦。這些家庭暴力/虐殺的案件並非偶然發生，並且通常涉及女受害人多重虐待後被殺。當女方決定離開一段暴力關係時，就是最危險的時候。

香港社會必需要正視，家庭暴力問題的根源就是性別權力上的不平等。將責任咎罪於受害女性不但強化性別不平等，甚至會合理化這些暴力行為，而進

一步深化父權的社會意識。媒體有社會責任正確地報導這些對女性暴力的案件，讓公眾關注及正視家庭暴力的問題。正如澳洲非政府組織 Our Watch 的總監 Mary Barry [所說](#)：「社區對女性受暴力對待問題的態度，是直接與媒體報導有關的。」

除了媒體，在前線工作的專業包括社工、醫護人員和警方，亦需要對家庭暴力問題有更深的了解及認識，並且改善對受害女性的支援、跟進工作及協助。因此，加強對前線專業人士處理家庭暴力個案的培訓及敏感度，實在是刻不容緩！

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