

Sexual assault on minor: Teacher gets 16 years in jail, 10 lashes

KUCHING: The Sessions Court here yesterday sentenced a teacher to 16 years in prison and 10 strokes of the cane after being found guilty of sexually assaulting a 14-year-old male student.

Judge Iris Awen Jon imposed the sentence on the 43-year-old, who was also the hostel warden, after finding that there was no reasonable doubt about the prosecution's case.

The man was accused of committing the offence against the boy in June 2022, at the quarters of the male hostel's warden in a boarding school here.

The charge was made under Section 14(a) of the Sexual Offences Against Children Act (SOACA) 2017, punishable under Section 14 of the same Act, read together with Section 16 of the same Act.

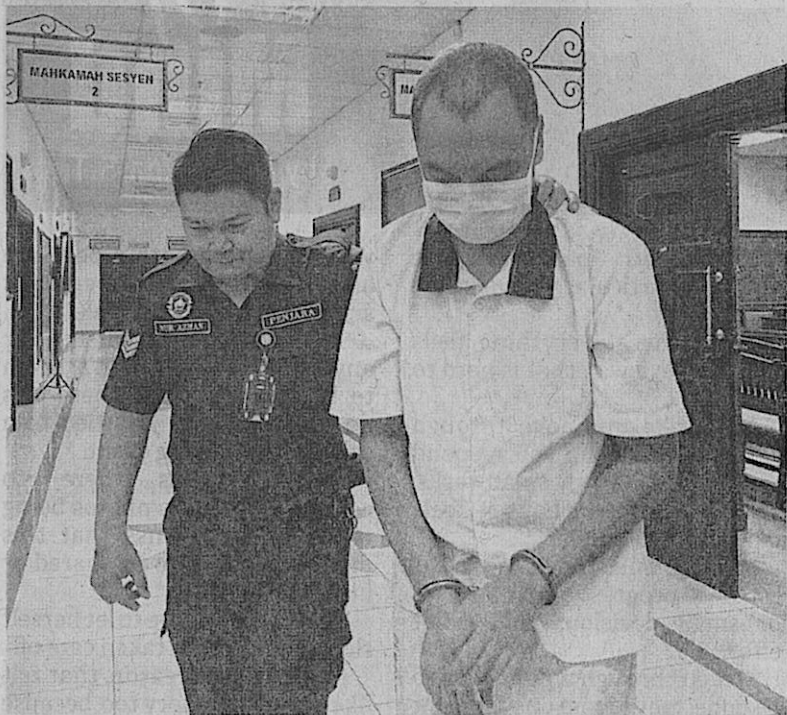
Based on the case evidence, the victim, who was sick at the time, had gone to the warden's quarters to seek help, where the teacher was accused of touching the victim's private parts while he was sleeping.

It is said that the assault had gone on up until 2023, especially when the boy committed offence at the hostel, causing him to experience trauma and feel uncomfortable being at school.

A police report was later filed after the victim informed his mother about the incident.

In her judgment, Iris said that at the defence stage, the accused claimed to have colleagues who worked as wardens and discipline teachers on a rotational schedule, in addition to having to return home to care for his elderly and sick parents.

However, she said the court found that the allegations were never raised during the



A prison personnel escorting the accused after the proceedings at Kuching Court Complex. — Photo by Hafizah Abdul Hamid

prosecution case, and that the accused also failed to call any relevant witnesses to support his testimony.

"The court observes that failure on the side of the accused to call the witnesses he relied upon, has rendered his assertions uncorroborated and bare denial.

"In consequence, the prosecution's version of events remains unshaken," she said in delivering her decision yesterday.

Iris then sentenced the accused to 13-year imprisonment and eight strokes of the cane under Section 14 of the SOACA 2017.

In addition, the accused was also given an additional sentence of three-year jail and two strokes of the cane under Section 16 of the same Act.

The judge also ordered the accused to undergo supervision for two years during the entire period of imprisonment in line with Section 26 of the SOACA 2017, as well as another two years after completing his sentence in accordance with the provisions of Section 27 of the SOACA 2017.

She also ordered the prison sentence for this case to run concurrently with the sentencing for the sexual assault case against a 16-year-old student, decided by the Kuching Session Court against the accused on Oct 2 last year.

The case was handled by Deputy Public Prosecutor Mohamad Aiman Mutallib Mohamad Shariff.

The accused was represented by a lawyer.