

Malaysian man who married 11-year-old Thai girl fined \$450 by sharia court

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Man who already had two wives also charged with polygamy in case that caused outrage in Malaysia

A Malaysian man who married an 11-year-old Thai girl has been fined 1,800 Malaysian Ringgit (US\$450) after pleading guilty in a sharia court.

Che Abdul Karim Che Abdul Hamid, who already has two wives and six children, was charged with polygamy and conducting the marriage without the court's permission.

From the conservative state of Kelantan in northern [Malaysia](#), the 41-year-old rubber dealer was charged under sections 19 and 124 of the state's Islamic family law.

Facing a fine and six months in prison, Judge Mohd Surbaineey Hussain on Monday sentenced the man to MYR 900 for each charge, according to a report in Harian Metro.

The marriage, solemnised this June at a border town mosque in Thailand's largely Muslim south, sparked outrage in Malaysia, reinvigorating debate about the need for legal reform to stop child brides.

While the 41-year-old was found guilty of polygamy and marrying without permission, he was not charged with underage marriage, as Malaysian lawyer Syahredzan Johan [pointed out on Twitter](#).

"This is why legislation is needed," he wrote, "At the federal level it should be a penal offence to marry a child."

Muslim girls below the age of 16 can legally marry in Malaysia with permission from a religious court.

The Hamid case became known after the man's second wife lodged a complaint with police. He claimed his third marriage was legal and that he had the blessing of the girl's parents.

Hamid told Bernama news he would formalise the marriage by applying for an official certificate in five years, when his latest wife would turn 16.

Deputy prime minister Wan Azizah Wan Ismail said authorities had investigated whether the girl's parents granted permission for the marriage due to poverty. This revealed her mother had asked for the marriage to be consummated only when she turned 16, until which time it was agreed she would remain at home.

Government data has shown there were at least 15,000 child brides in Malaysia in 2010.

Referencing the case, the Sisters in Islam organisation called on Malaysians "not to use Islam to

justify child marriage.” [1]

Kate Lamb

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P.S.

The Guardian

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jul/10/malaysian-man-marriage-11-year-old-thailand-girl-fined>

Footnotes

[1] <http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?article45210>