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MTUC-Wage

MTUC LAUNCHES RM900 A MONTH MINIMUM WAGE CAMPAIGN

PETALING JAYA, June 9 (Bernama) -- The Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC) today launched a nationwide campaign to gather support for its RM900 a month minimum wage proposal.

MTUC secretary general G.Rajasekaran said in the campaign, members of the union will send postcards to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Human Resources Minister Datuk Dr Fong Chan Onn.

He said 10,000 Labour Day 2000 Declaration postcards will be sent to both Dr Mahathir and Dr Fong.

"The public, who have expressed their support for the campaign, will be requested to write to government," he told a press conference here today.

"We estimate the minimum wage proposal will benefit at least two million workers in the country."

He said a study of wage scales of 165 companies showed that even in major towns such as Penang, Ipoh, Shah Alam and Johor Baharu, unskilled workers were being paid as low as between RM300 and RM350 per month.

He said union representatives of Pekerja Felda Trading Sdn Bhd in Kuala Lumpur reported their minimum wage at RM273 a month.

Rajasekaran said the MTUC special committee on minimum wage had sought to have the minimum wage at RM900 a month based its calculations on the essential and basic needs of a single person.

It said meals and refreshment would account for half of the RM900 a month amount, RM135 for accommodation, RM130 for transportation costs, RM99 for EPF contributed by the worker, RM82 for other expenses and RM4 for Socso.

"We don't think the figure is unreasonable ... nobody is going to become rich by getting a salary of RM900 a month," he said.

He said the MTUC believes if the minimum wage proposal is implemented, thousands of women will return to the workforce.

On the government's statement that wage increases must be based on productivity, Rajasekaran said a minimum wage system must be put in place before productivity based annual wage increases can be implemented.

Other calls by the MTUC are the establishment of a retrenchment and unemployment fund, ratification and implementation of ILO Convention 87 on Freedom of Association and the Right to Organise, better maternity protection and raising the retirement age to 60.

These calls are contained in the postcards to be sent to Dr Mahathir and Dr Fong, he said.

-- BERNAMA

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