

We are rightful owners, say Kg Tengah folk

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By **Andrew Sagayam**

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs: Residents of Kampung Tengah near Taman Harmonis in Gombak here, whose existence and citizenship status are being disputed, today denied they are illegals and that the land they live on is owned by foreigners.

Insisting they are rightful citizens of the country, they said there are no illegals or foreigners living there, adding that there are several residents who married Indonesians who have obtained permanent residence status.

Forty-four families are occupying the 44 double-storey terrace houses. They include more than 100 students, among whom 60 are university students.

A resident, who only wanted to be known as Nasaruddin, said he is a Singaporean who came to Malaysia more than 12 years ago and bought the land after changing the land use.

"I paid RM40,000 to transform the land use to built my house and for the drainage system. I signed all the relevant documents in the presence of the district officer from the Land Office.

"So why are the authorities making a big issue of this," said Nasaruddin, 40, who teaches Quran at the surau in Taman Harmonis.

"Most residents here have intermarried and the land or house owners are citizens who have the right to purchase land from the government through proper channels," he said, adding that most of them have been living here for more than a decade.

Another resident, who only wanted to be identified as Ansari, said he bought the land according to the law.

He said that if it was approved by the government, no questions should be asked on the authenticity of the purchase.

"I have all the documents pertaining to the purchase and if my family has lived here for more than five years, how can the authorities now say that I

am living on illegally purchased land," said Ansari, 40.

The residents also pointed out that about 200m from their kampung is an "authentic" settlement, in Kampung Tengah Tambahan, where Indonesians live on government property.

They claimed there are at least 20 to 30 Indonesians living there.

Some have built their own houses without purchasing or getting approvals from the local council.

A check revealed that the housing area is supplied with water, electricity and telephone lines and its surrounding areas are quite spacious.

The area is quite secluded, about 2km from the main road leading into Taman Harmonis and the partly tarred road leading to it is narrow, allowing only one car to pass through each time.

Selangor exco member Datuk Mokhtar Dahlan said the Gombak Land Office district officer will submit a detailed report to Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Mohamad Khir Toyo soon on the eight areas within the district which are involved.

They are Gombak Utara, Sg Cincin, Kg Tengah, Gombak, Sungai Tua, Kg Kemensah, Simpang Tiga and Kg Changkat.