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Stop the destruction of our green hills

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I COULD not help but think that "Gog and Magog" live in Malaysia. I see developers cutting trees and flattening hills like they are cakes to share at a party.

When you see the scars they have left on the hills you feel strongly that only monsters can be responsible for such destruction.

I see housing development projects even on hills that were once beautiful green jungles. What typically replaces these jungles is high density hole-in-the-wall housing blocks that are unfit even to be called low-cost flats.

What I regret even more is seeing these "low-cost flats" left empty as some people buy them because bank loans are so easy to get and they think they will be able to sell or rent them out for profit.

The purchasers could not be low income earners who need a home, because they can afford to leave their low-cost flats empty to live elsewhere.

One clear example for everyone to see is the development near the Sungai Buloh rest area. This greenest of the green lungs in Kuala Lumpur is now gone forever.

What has been put up in its place is not nice to look at. I think even the Sungai Buloh jail has lower density "population" and fits in better with the landscape. I am frustrated. The newspapers have highlighted time and time again the abuse of green areas and the consequences. The facts are very clear - floods, landslips, lost beauty of the land, muddy rivers, low water catchment, etc.

The question is why do the Government and the people continue to allow this to happen? Do we not care for our hills?

Where is the Opposition? Is this not a cause big enough for them to fight for? Is it not holy enough to bring out some fatwas that state it is wrong to treat nature the way the developers are treating it? Can't we see that hills cut now will be gone forever?

I hope the Government will immediately stop all new development projects that tear down hills. Please make it more difficult for homes to be purchased merely for speculation. Please increase the amount of deposit for purchase or, better still, instruct banks to approve loans only for completed projects.

When Highland Towers fell, all hill projects were temporarily stopped. What evidence from that tragedy shows that we have since changed the way we do things?

When Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad flew over a destroyed hill and made his comments, a lot of promises were made by the developers and local councils that hills would not be destroyed the same way again.

The Government should stop further destruction of this beautiful country which now suffers the ravages of over development for quick profit for the few.