

PM: Check on all structures on agri land

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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak today called for an examination of all houses and other structures erected on agricultural land to ascertain the risk they faced from landslides.

He said such structures were exposed to the risk of landslides if they were erected contrary to guidelines.

The National Land Code permitted the construction of houses on agricultural land but they must be built in accordance with the guidelines, he said after a visit to the site in Hulu Langat of a landslide which killed 16 people last Saturday.

Nine people were rescued from the rubble of the landslide which hit an orphanage, Rumah Anak-anak Yatim dan Anak-anak Hidayah Madrasah Al-Taqwa, at about 2.30pm.

Najib and his wife Rosmah Mansor had gone to the site soon after returning from the United States where the prime minister had made a working visit.

They were accompanied on the visit to the landslide site by Norainee Abdul Rahman, wife of the deputy prime minister, Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Minister Noh Omar and Works Minister Shaziman Mansor.

Najib said the government would provide an allocation to rebuild the landslide-damaged orphanage at a safe location.

He said the government would discuss the matter with the administrator of the the orphanage.

"We will determine the quantum of allocation and the location soon," he told reporters after the visit.

Twenty-five people were trapped in the rubble of the landslide, but nine of them were rescued.

The prime minister handed over RM10,000 to the next-of-kin of each of the 16 people who died in the tragedy.

Earth displaced equivalent to 30 lorry loads

He said the government would also donate RM10,000 to each of the nine injured victims soon.

The Association of Wives of Ministers and Deputy Ministers (Bakti) also donated RM2,000 to the next-of-kin of each of the victims.

The Badan Amal dan Kasih Negeri Selangor (Kasih) donated RM10,000 and the Taqwa Foundation of the Federal Territory Islamic Council donated RM42,000 to the orphanage.

Najib said the tragedy could have been averted if the management of the orphanage had adhered to the guidelines.

He also said that there were enforcement weaknesses, especially on the part of the local authorities to inform the people of the risk of landslides.

24 buried alive in landslide at orphanage There had been minor soil movements in the area, the signs indicative of a landslide, he said.

"Based on satellite images, there had been landslips near the building, with the earth displaced equivalent

to 30 lorry loads, besides tilting trees and cracks on the building," he said.

Asked whether the government would take more stern action against landowners who were reluctant to move despite their land being classified as risky, Najib said it was a question of choice.

"Maybe their land is most valuable and is the only property that they own. So long as there is no disaster, they are not prepared to do anything to adhere to the guidelines," he said.

Najib said landowners should be prepared to sacrifice a little, but unfortunately many of them were not willing to do so.

- Bernama

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