

PM's pledge: No eviction till housing decision is made
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Families members of former Ladang Bukit Jalil workers have finally met Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak over their housing woes, after camping outside his office in Putrajaya two months ago.

Najib declined to immediately grant them their request for four acres of land, but promised they would not have to fight off more eviction threats until he had made a decision on the matter, though no date for this was given.

Ladang Bukit Jalil action committee treasurer K Balakrishnan, along with representatives V Santhi and K Parasivam, met with Najib at a closed-door meeting at the Prime Minister's Office in Putrajaya yesterday.

Joining the prime minister were a National Union of Plantation Workers representative, Human Resources Minister Dr S Subramaniam, Federal Territories and Urban Well-being Minister Raja Nong Chik Raja Zainal Abidin and the deputy minister, M Saravanan.

The action committee members pushed the premier on the basis of his Tamil catchphrase nambikei (trust), but Najib laughed and said he had many other issues on his plate as well, Balakrishnan told Malaysiakini.

Kinrara Group Estates Sdn Bhd owned both Ladang Bukit Jalil and Kinrara Estate, but the government acquired Ladang Bukit Jalil and offered its workers low-cost, high-rise flats as compensation.

The workers of Kinrara Estate, which was converted into a modern housing zone, were offered low-cost terrace houses.

Since then, the former workers of Ladang Bukit Jalil, who have been working on the estate for another 15 years after it was acquired, have faced multiple eviction threats.

"If we wanted the flats, we would have left in 2006, and not met with Najib," said Balakrishnan, stressing that the residents had refused the offer as they wanted comparable treatment as the Kinrara Estate workers.