

A month later, flood victims still in tents

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More than a month since floods paralysed the east coast, residents in worst hit Kuala Krai, Kelantan are still living in tents.

While people make do living in tents donated by NGOs beside what remained of their homes, three families decide to camp out in a graveyard in Kubur Dala, documentary filmmaker Jules Ong said.

"One month later at Kuala Krai, homes still damaged. The photos look the same like the ones I took a month ago," he said in a Facebook post.

Ong, who wrote a harrowing account of the floods after delivering aid at the height of the crisis in December is in Kelantan again to assist with recovery relief.

The former news reporter said many of the tents in Kuala Krai were donated by NGOs like Shelterbox UK, while Mercy Malaysia is seen building pre-fabricated houses.

Pictures he uploaded shows debris from the flood which hit a peak around Christmas last year still piled up on roadsides while families are seen sitting on tarps in the open.

"Asked the graveyard Kubur Dala family of eight, including six children, if they received aid from the government.

"One mattress, two pillows and a kg of rice. 'But we received aid from NGOs and ordinary people'," Ong wrote.

Too many forms

Similarly, one 'Pakcik Ibrahim' whose cement home by Sungai Kelantan was reduced to rubble by flood waters said he received little aid from the state because there were just too many forms to fill.

"But the government of Yala province Thailand gave 11 generator sets and a giant hose to pump river water for the villagers who are now living in tents," Ong reported.

14 of the 18 homes in the village were swept away when the river rose historical levels of up to six stories high, he said.

Ibrahim says a "police friend" told him to leave the kampung three days before the worst of the floods hit.

"(He) hinted that the gates of the dam upstream would be opened," Ong wrote.

On Dec 21, the National Security Council (NSC) denied a rumour that Kelantan will be flooded by water released from a dam in Sukhirin, Thailand.

The NSC said a check with the Royal Irrigation Department of Thailand also found that the dam does not exist and that floods were due to heavy rainfall of 400 millilitres a day.

Bernama then reported that the closest dam to Malaysia is located in Munok district in southern Thailand and the dam was closed at the time.

Homes on the way

On Jan 29, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak in Manek Urai launched models of 2500 new houses that will be built to replace those damaged.

Kelantan flood disaster special committee chairperson Mustapa Mohamed reportedly said the federal government is working with the state government to find suitable location for the homes.

The 61 square feet three bedroom homes cost RM48,000 per unit and take 75 days to build.

The Selangor government also commissioned developers with technology to build pre-fabricated homes.

Selangor Menteri Besar Azmin Ali told Malaysiakini last month that it is waiting for the Kelantan government to determine the location for the new homes.

The Kelantan branch of the Malay Chamber of Commerce of Malaysia (DPMM) will also build 104 houses in Kuala Krai after obtaining land approval from the state, Bernama reported.

The first phase of the project was expected to be completed before the Ramadan, it reported.

The Star reported that 2,374 families in Kelantan lost their homes, with 999 families placed in temporary tents by the government and others in evacuation centres.