

NGOs step up pressure for minimum wage
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The government's blog on the minimum wage issue has failed for the simple reason that the intended target of workers are not computer savvy, according to an NGO.

Jerit, an oppressed people's network, together with Union and Factory Workers Coalition (GPKK), said this in a memorandum protesting the statement of Deputy Human Resources Minister Maznah Mazlan in Parliament, that workers had failed to respond to a government blog on the minimum salary issue.

The memorandum was handed over to Human Resource Minister S Subramaniam, after a 15-minute demonstration in front of his office today.

ngo workers and association rights pc 160807 v selvamV Selvam, (left) a Jerit spokesperson, questioned the relevance of the blog, as many factory workers do not have the opportunity to surf the Internet.

"Many were not even aware of the effort by the government," he said.

He suggested that the authorities go to the ground to personally experience the difficulties factory workers face in life.

"How do they expect workers to survive on a household income of only RM1,200 when prices have increased by almost 600 percent?"

Among other points, the memorandum described the pain of the workers, caused by the government's failure to implement a minimum wage of RM1,500 , set up an employee dismissal fund and implement the automatic registration of union workers.

On the minister's response to the memorandum, Selvam said: "We received the standard response from a politician. He said the ministry will look into the matter as they are worried about investors and the business climate."

On June 22, Maznah said the ministry will continue operating its 'minimum salary' blog despite the poor response from the public.

She added that the blog, which was launched on March 24, had only received 77 responses as of June 22.

Change of government needed

A cement factory operator, K Kathiresan, said that the current government is not bothered about workers' welfare.

"For things to change, we definitely need a new government," he added.

He said the issue of loan sharks will continue to surface if there is no minimum salary Act.

"They (the government) should be able to see the logic behind the push for the minimum salary because, since 2003, as the cost of living is skyrocketing," he added.

The father of two is currently earning only RM1,400, with two sisters and a wife to support.

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