

Villagers rally against 'inhumane' developer
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About 200 villagers braved the pouring rain to demonstrate against the developer who sent them a three-month eviction notice to vacate their homes in Jelutong.

The group, led by local Malay non-governmental organisations and members of Umno, shouted slogans and presented speeches lashing out at the developer for being 'heartless and inhumane'.

PAS and PKR have distanced themselves from the event, saying they do not support the protest against the state government.

The villagers vowed to carry out rallies to protest their eviction woes every Friday outside the Jelutong mosque until 'someone' intervenes to help the villagers.

The group, represented by the Jelutong Action Committee Against Eviction, added they planned to send a memorandum demanding the state to freeze the development project until the crisis affecting villagers was resolved.

The same demands would be sent to Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak, asking him to intervene in the matter.

Coordinator Umar Abdullah, one of the organisers of the protest, said the eviction move affected 16 households of residents of all ethnic groups, including the Chinese and Indians.

"We already live like sisters and brothers, but now we are being chased out of our land in a very undignified manner," said the Jelutong Pantai Umno branch chief.

"The state is being too friendly with developers who are capitalists and have no humanitarian feelings for us poor village folk. All they think about is money," he added.

He blamed both Umno and Pakatan Rakyat for being so friendly with developers until village folk were marginalised, although the latter had occupied the land for about a century.

He also said the rakyat are watching whether the 1Malaysia slogan was real or merely just a slogan and anthem to be sung in television and radio programmes.

The controversial development along Kampung Jalan Pokok Assam has resulted in about 200 villagers receiving eviction notices.

PR appointed municipal councillors claimed they have coaxed the developer to extend the eviction notice for three months until the fasting month and Aidilfitri celebrations in September are over.

They also blamed BN and Umno for the current development crisis as the mega-projects, including luxurious high-rise apartments, were approved before 2008, when the BN was ruling Penang.

Meagre compensation package

The villagers are crying foul, saying that they have been given a meagre compensation

package of RM70,000 which is not sufficient for them to purchase a flat.

This had led to several quarters, including Jelutong Umno members and local Malay NGOs, to champion their cause.

PR Malay councilors have been accused of being traitors and masterminds behind the move to wipe out the Malay community from the face of Penang, which they vehemently denied.

Meanwhile, Persatuan Kebajikan Insan Mulia coordinator Aminah Abdullah (left), who was present at the rally, told her former Pakatan Rakyat colleagues to "let the past go" and focus instead on how the new state government can help better the lives of the affected villagers.

Aminah, who is former state PKR Women's chief, expressed annoyance that PAS and PKR have been blaming BN and Umno for the villagers current state of affairs.

"They (PAS and PKR) are really one-sided. Instead of supporting the villagers, they have instead become the spokespersons for the state and developers, which is why they have earned the label 'mastermind' behind the massive development around the area," she said.

"Come on, forget the past. Yes, Umno did not do their job, we all know that, but now that PR has managed to rule the state, please use the authority and resources available to help solve the problems of these villagers, not just whine that it was BN's fault," she added firmly.

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