

Umno assemblyperson slammed for 'eviction lies'
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Kg Binjai villagers in Bayan Lepas have lambasted Pulau Betong state assemblyperson Muhammad Farid Saad (BN) for saying that they have been evicted from their homes without proper notice.

Farid, who is secretary to the Minister in Prime Minister's Department Mohd Nor Yaacob, was reported by a Malay language daily on July 5 as saying the villagers were abruptly issued with notices to leave their homes.

He had also reportedly said that the sudden eviction had forced seven families from the village to put up at the Permatang Damar Laut public hall.

The allegations were refuted by Kg Binjai Action Committee representative Mohd Faizal Ab Rahman, who said he had just been made aware of the pending development project in the area, following a notice put up by the Penang Municipal Council recently.

"The Pulau Betong representative is slandering the state government and trying to create fear in the hearts of the villagers," he said in a media statement.

"His (Farid's) statement is irresponsible and will indirectly stir racial sentiments among the villagers against the state government," he added.

Mohd Faizal said he was confident that the current state government would resolve the matter between the villagers and the developer.

"We are not against development and we are confident that a good solution can be found between the two parties. And for your information, YB (Farid), we are still here," he said.

"Do not forget that some of us were evicted before, from Kg Sg Batu in 2006, and the YB who represented us in Bayan Lepas (Lim Chien Aun from Gerakan) was also the former state exco in charge of housing," he added.

Meanwhile, Penang Island municipal councillor Iszuree Ibrahim slammed Farid for trying to provoke the villagers by saying that the state was cruel to the 46 families living in the 2.5-hectare site.

Iszuree, a PAS appointee to the post, said Farid's statement in the Malay daily contained lies to disparage the Pakatan Rakyat state government, which is currently led by DAP.

'Game played by Umno to undermine Pakatan'

As a result of Farid's statement, relatives who lived outside Penang were worried about their families who were reported to have been "chased out" of their homes, said Iszuree.

He said he had met with the villagers last week and encouraged them to set up an action committee to look into problems which were caused by BN before the political tsunami of 2008.

Iszuree was accompanied to the meeting by Penang PAS deputy chairperson Rosidi Husein, a lawyer who explained to the people about their rights and the role of the action

committee.

"What to do? When Pakatan took over the state, we were forced to accept the remnants left behind by BN," he said.

"No demolition has taken place in Kg Binjai as alleged by Farid. This is just a game played by Umno and BN to undermine Pakatan, which is actively developing this state to be better than it was under the previous government," he added.

Iszuree said Farid, as a people's representative, should work with the municipal council, PAS and PKR to assist the villagers who were confronted with development problems, instead of stabbing them in the back with false statements.

"Umno leaders did not pay any visit to the village but spoke from afar and perceived whatever Pakatan was doing for the villagers as a form of persecution," he added.

"This is the real face of Umno and BN. They continue to point fingers at Pakatan despite being the actual creators of the problems."

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