

Villagers facing eviction warned not to trust Umno
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Penang PAS deputy chief Mujahid Yusof Rawa has called upon the Jalan Pokok Asam villagers facing eviction not to be fooled by the persuasions of Umno, which is out to capitalise on their plight.

Mujahid Yusof Rawa (right), the Parit Buntar state assemblyperson in the only seat held by PAS in Penang, said he was not against Umno assisting the affected villagers but warned they may eventually become victims of its political manoeuvres.

"This is a Malay problem, we understand that Umno definitely wants to intervene but I am afraid that the villagers would eventually become their victims," said Mujahid, who held a two-hour dialogue session with the villagers in a Jelutong surau at 10pm last night.

"Please do not be used by Umno, especially by the 17 'dissolved' branches. They are not even recognised by their party, how do you think they will help you?" he pleaded at the session attended by about 30 villagers who face eviction by Oct 1.

"Yes, they can continue to shout that the Malays are marginalised, but what have they done for 50 years (when they were part of the ruling state government with Gerakan)?" he queried.

Mujahid also told the villagers that the party and its ally PKR have distanced themselves from demonstrations organised by Umno or the villagers against the state government.

"If you want to demonstrate against the state government, you are welcome to do so but we in PAS and PKR will not join you," he told the villagers bluntly.

"We are willing to discuss and negotiate and since we are already doing that with the state and Developer. We cannot stop our efforts and join demonstrations. I hope you all understand.

"If you still want to continue with the rallies, think about the consequences," he warned.

Last week, Jelutong Umno organised a rally attended by about 150 people outside Masjid Jamek Jelutong, where the state government was accused of destroying the Malay community by wiping out their villages from the face of Penang.

The Umno members mostly come from the 17 embattled branches representing 4,500 members, which the party state leadership had deemed closed and invalid.

However, the branches held an annual general meeting on Monday, and vowed to assist the villagers by setting up an action committee which is willing to cooperate with any political party or NGO to achieve their aims.

Mujahid advised the villagers to raise their grievances at the right platform, where their grouses would be heard directly by the right people - Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng, Jelutong parliamentarian Jeff Ooi and the developer.

"Like it or not, Pakatan Rakyat is the government. When it comes to the question of land, it

is under the state's jurisdiction," he told the worried villagers, who represent nine families who are waiting for negotiations with the developers to bring them the best solution to their woes.

"Also, we have to think about the law, we cannot go above that. But I can raise all your issues to the state, I can use my party platform because I have no position at state level and also no interests there to protect," he assured them.

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