

'Be fair, just in relocating squatters'

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The Perak DAP has called for a blueprint on the state government's squatter relocation exercise to ensure that those affected are treated in a fair and just way.

NONESate party deputy head M Kulasegaran (right) also said the BN-led state government's 'zero-squatter' plan cannot be achieved so long as there is poverty and a lack of jobs in rural areas.

He noted that the number of squatters in the state had almost doubled from 7,950 in 2004 to 14,203 in 2008, thereby pushing back the deadline to achieve squatter-free status.

In 2000, Menteri Besar Tajol Rosli Mohd Ghazali had said the state would be squatter-free by 2005. When this was not achieved, incumbent MB Zambry Abd Kadir said the situation would be resolved by 2015.

Said Kulasegaran: "It is no use declaring a date which the state government cannot meet. Shifting the goal-posts is no answer (in dealing with) the growing squatter problem."

He said the state government must come up with a blueprint to address the underlying factors, and set up a high-level committee to formulate a policy as well as ways to settle related matters.

"It is the duty and obligation of an efficient state government to find a just and a fair relocation of all squatters in Perak. The question is, has the state government the political will to do so?"

'Still no relocation'

Kulasegaran was speaking to journalists yesterday before meeting Ipoh Mayor Roshidi Hashim on the fate of 50 families who have lived in Kampung Tai Lee in Buntong for close to 100 years.

The residents had been assured of resettlement in Pusing through letters by the Land Office just before the 2008 general election, but this has not materialised.

On Jan 3, 2010, during a state-organised gotong-royong programme, Zambry directed the Ipoh City Council to find a solution.

Kulasegaran claimed that this, too, has produced no results.

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