

Kg Tanjung Tokong residents still face eviction
Malaysiakini.com
August 27, 2010

A group of villagers from Kampung Tanjung Tokong who have been facing eviction since January 2008 due to a massive development project, are beginning to realise they may still have to go despite a change of government after the March 8 general election that year.

Just days before that election, DAP and PKR candidates, including Lim Guan Eng who later became Chief minister, had rallied behind the affected villagers, calling for their problems to be recognised as they were from the lower-income and marginalised group.

pas forum 170609 liew chin tong 01Yet today, two years on, Bukit Bendera (DAP) MP Liew Chin Tong (left), who represents the area, said Penang has yet to draw up any plans for the village as it is "entirely in the developer's hands at this stage".

On the other hand, the developer, UDA Holding Berhad, who issued the eviction notice to the villagers, has asked to meet Lim "to resolve various issues concerning its project in the area".

Liew said the meeting would most probably take place after the Hari Raya holidays.

He added he had met UDA chairperson Nur Jazlan Mohamad, and the meeting was "friendly".

nur jazlan mohamed 071008 01"I was briefed on the status of UDA's Tg Tokong redevelopment project by Jazlan and UDA's CEO Jaafar Abu Hassan," Liew told Malaysiakini.

"Jazlan (right) has indicated his intention to meet the chief minister after Hari Raya to resolve various issues concerning the project," he added.

Kampung Tanjung Tokong, located in the vicinity of Penang's tourist belt of Batu Feringgi beach and Gurney Drive, was one of the areas afflicted by the 2004 tsunami.

It is considered 'a squatter area' despite the villagers having stayed on the land for more than a century.

It is seeing a major transformation with land reclamation activities for a new township of bungalows and terrace houses, together with modern marinas and a commercial complex.

While predominantly Malay, Tanjung Tokong is also home to the Tua Pek Kong temple as it was home to Chinese migrants before the coming of Francis Light in 1786.

Today, many of the villagers have moved to high-rise flats after part of the village was demolished and a road was built right through it, while reclamation work was also carried out.

Conflicting demands

Meanwhile, Nur Jazlan told the media that he was trying to work with the state government on the relocation of the 'squatters'.

He said the majority of Tanjung Tokong residents had agreed to move, but "a few have

conflicting demands".

NONE However, the villagers, who are part of the 1,000 odd residents affected by the project, were not in favour of moving without a proper compensation package.

Most vocal among them is resident Mohd Salleh Yahya who had said that the residents do not deem themselves as squatters as they have lived on the land all their lives.

They want the developer to relocate them with a proper package and asked for the agreement to be in writing.

They had hoped that the state would preserve their kampong as a heritage zone.

But Georgetown's Heritage Festival has come and gone in July, while Tanjong Tokong and its villagers await with gloom the day they have to leave their homes.

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Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/141267>