

Pensioners want to meet Abdullah to ask for better benefits

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KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian Government Pensioners' Association wants to meet Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Badawi to seek better pension benefits, including raising pension levels above the poverty level and improving the formula for calculating pensions.

The Association's secretary-general Husain Anjang Pulau said the association wanted to hand over a memorandum to urge the Government to amend the Pensions Act for these benefits.

Attempts had been made in the last two years but the group had not succeeded in getting an appointment with Abdullah, he said.

"We were supposed to meet him in 2005 but his wife, Puan Seri Endon, passed away that day," he said, adding that since then they have been unable to get a date with Abdullah.

Husain said the Act was restrictive and had prevented pensioners from getting full pension benefits.

"Also, the minimum pension under the law currently is RM180, which is hardcore poverty level and unacceptable," he said.

The association also wants the Government to calculate pensions based on the total number of years in service rather than only on a maximum of 25 years of service, he said.

"If a person puts in 33 years of service, and his last drawn salary was RM4,000, he should rightly get RM2,640 based on the formula $1/600 \times 396 \text{ months} \times \text{RM4,000}$.

"Since he is subjected to 300 months or half his salary, whichever is lower, he gets only RM2,000 and loses RM640," he said.

The association also wanted the Government to remove the 30% reduction of derivative pension after 12-and-a-half years because cost of living had gone up and some still had school-going children, he said.

The Government must also continue providing for a spouse who was married to a civil service retiree when the latter dies, he said.