

PM: NO EVICTIONS IN URBAN RENEWAL BILL

Original land status, whether Malay reserve land or any other category, to remain unchanged

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THE Urban Renewal Bill has been in development for over 10 years, with no suggestion that original landowners will be forcibly evicted from their land or premises.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said the original land status, whether Malay reserve land or any other existing classification, will remain unchanged.

"Guidelines for urban renewal have been in place since 2012. These were refined in 2013, and the drafting of the bill began in 2015. Concerns that the bill is being rushed are unfounded," he said during Prime Minister's Question Time in the Dewan Rakyat.

"For context, in 2020, former federal territories minister Tan Sri Annuar Musa led the urban renewal programme, focusing on housing projects over 40 years old.

"In 2021, then housing minister Datuk Zuraida Kamaruddin initiated the drafting of the bill, a process carried on by her successor, Datuk Seri Reezal Merican Naina Merican.

"By September 2022, Datuk Seri Dr Shahidan Kassim announced that Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) had identified 30 areas for redevelopment."

Anwar said since 2012, 74 engagement sessions had been held to address public concerns.

"When I visited Flat Sri Perlis, one of the oldest housing areas with severely dilapidated single-room units, it was clear that action was needed.

"As a government focused on new projects, landmarks, and quality housing, we cannot ignore these rundown buildings.

"Negotiations must take place, but in some cases, like the housing project on Jalan Tun Razak, everyone agreed except for one individual, causing the project to stagnate. Can we afford to let an entire project fall apart because of one person's objection?"

Anwar said, following this, a consensus threshold had been set, requiring 80 per cent of residents to agree before negotiations could commence for buildings under 30 years old, 75 per cent for those over 30 years old, and a simple majority of 51 per cent for abandoned or derelict housing.

"The threshold is necessary to move projects forward... disputes can be taken to court, where, after five years, the landowner will be awarded compensation based on current market value," he said.

Anwar, who is also finance minister, assured that state land ownership remained unaffected.

"The Executive Housing Committee does not assume the role of the state government... I assure you that (the bill's) principles align with the Federal Constitution.

"In drafting this legislation, we have not overlooked existing legal principles."

Anwar said his administration stands firm behind the urban renewal programme, despite concerns over Malay reserve land.

"We have decided to proceed with the bill, despite the controversy and accusations, including concerns about Malay land.

"For the first time since independence,

this government has declared 50 acres of Bandar Seri Malaysia as Malay reserve land.

"No previous government, including PN, has ever had the courage to declare any area in Kuala Lumpur as Malay reserve land.

"There must be legislation in place because, as I mentioned, (the project) on Jalan Tun Razak has been abandoned for years and remains undeveloped to this

URBAN RENEWAL BILL

534 total sites in Peninsular Malaysia

139 in Kuala Lumpur

Combined gross development value: RM355.3 billion

CONSENSUS FOR

Under 30 years 80%

Over 30 years 75%

Abandoned and derelict 51%

APHIC NST

day. The process needs to be expedited.

"This is why I believe wisdom, including from the previous governments, led to this proposal. However, as we know, the moment something is deemed controversial, everything gets postponed," he said.

Meanwhile, Housing and Local Government Minister Nga Kor Ming echoed Anwar's statements in a Facebook post, saying the Urban Renewal Bill was very much needed.

"Can we sacrifice an entire project agreed upon by 99 per cent just because of one person?"

Legislation aimed at urban renewal is a common approach in many countries around the world, with governments introducing similar measures to revitalise cities.

In Hong Kong, the government introduced measures to repurpose underutilised industrial spaces by lowering the ownership application threshold for compulsory sales for redevelopment from 90 per cent to 80 per cent.

Moscow's urban renewal programme, launched in 2017, targets the replacement of outdated housing with modern residential buildings.

In the United States, the government implemented redevelopment programmes, notably under the Housing Act of 1949. **Additional reporting by Mohamad Al As**