

ANAK seeks new injunction, to stop FGVH listing 'at all costs'

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KUALA LUMPUR, March 15 — A FELDA settlers' group has vowed a fresh suit to stop the proposed listing of FELDA Global Ventures Holdings Berhad (FGVH) that Putrajaya says will benefit those involved in the land scheme.

The government promised yesterday to move ahead with the proposed listing of FGVH, with or without the 51 per cent stake in commercial arm FELDA Holdings held by settlers of the Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA).

A group of eight settlers had last month won a temporary court order blocking the transfer of shares from their FELDA Investment Co-operative (KPF) to FGVH, a crucial step in the plan to list the plantation firm.

FELDA Settlers' Children's Association (ANAK) chairman Mazlan Aliman (picture) said the association was looking at different ways in which to halt the listing, one of which is to file an injunction to stop the leasing of FELDA plantation land in different states throughout the country.

"One of the things we are looking at is to file a court injunction to stop the leasing of 360,000 hectares of FELDA plantation land.

"The success of (FGVH's) the listing depends on the acquisition of the most important assets like KPF shares and (FELDA) land. This is what we want to stop... at all costs," he told The Malaysian Insider via text message.

"The government has betrayed the policy initiated by (the late) Tun (Abdul) Razak (Hussein). They do not respect the rights of FELDA folk," added Mazlan.

The PAS central working committee member said that he will reveal details of ANAK's plan in Parliament at a 3pm news conference today.

Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Ahmad Maslan has said the government will not delay the listing beyond June as it wanted to capitalise on high crude palm oil (CPO) prices.

He said the listing will go ahead whether or not the settlers are successful in winning an injunction against the share transfer when the matter is heard in court on March 22.

The government previously insisted it has the backing of "the majority of settlers", despite reports of widespread opposition.

FELDA chairman Tan Sri Isa Samad had announced a special purpose vehicle (SPV), after the court blocked the share transfer, to cater for the welfare of some 112,000 settlers.

Isa said that as any potential proceeds from the proposed listing would not be channelled through KPF, the SPV would assume this role and ensure that settlers would benefit directly

from the listing and participate fully in any potential growth.

But PKR charged that the SPV would only lower FGVH's listing value, saying that this decision was a direct snub of the co-operative.

KPF has about 220,000 members, of whom 112,635 are FELDA settlers. The rest are FELDA employees and children of settlers.

Reuters reported last month that Putrajaya could delay FGVH's listing due to settlers' opposition, saying the deal risks undermining Barisan Nasional's (BN) support from voters long considered the ruling pact's vote bank.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak had recently said the listing of FGVH, announced in Budget 2012, is expected to take place in April instead of the middle of the year as was earlier planned.

But critics contend that the proposed listing, which will see loss-making FGVH assume control of KPF, will short-change smallholders and saddle FELDA with up to RM1.5 billion in yearly deficits.

FGVH subsidiaries such as FELDA Iffco Sdn Bhd, FELDA Global Technologies, FELDA Global Ventures Middle East and FELDA Global Ventures Arabia are reported to have chalked up accumulated losses of around RM500 million up to last year.

However, Ahmad told Parliament yesterday FGVH recorded pre-tax profits of RM203 million and RM366 million in 2009 and 2010 respectively.

The profitable FELDA Holdings has a workforce of some 19,000 employees, with a labour force of 46,795 workers at 300 estates, 70 palm oil mills, seven refineries, four kernel-crushing plants, 13 rubber factories, manufacturing plants and several logistic and bulking installations spread throughout Malaysia and several locations overseas.

The government has said the move will result in a RM5.9 billion lump-sum payment to settlers but ANAK has insisted it will not be in cash but shares in FGVH.

Former Finance Minister Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah has also criticised the move, saying it would expose land belonging to 200,000 smallholders to the open market.

But former PM Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad recently defended the planned listing of FGVH as a "great opportunity" for FELDA to expand.

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