

Penang Gerakan Calls For Blacklist Of Companies Clearing Forests Illegally
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GEORGE TOWN, July 10 (Bernama) -- Penang Gerakan on Thursday challenged the state government to blacklist errant companies involved in what it described as the illegal clearing of forests for development.

Its secretary, Oh Tong Keong, said the Penang government should be courageous enough to act against these irresponsible developers.

He said that besides the errant companies, the directors should also be banned from participating in any future development in Penang.

This move could effectively curb the rape of the hilly land, he said in a statement here.

He said taking the errant companies to court under the existing laws did not seem to be a deterrent in stopping the illegal clearing as the penalty was like a drop of water in the ocean for the developers.

Oh said the illegal clearing of land on Bukit Relau in Relau and Bukit Kukus in Paya Terubong showed that the current legislation was no longer adequate to curb illegal clearing of Penang's forests.

He said the Penang Island Municipal Council (MPPP) should refer to Section 19 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1976 to prosecute the irresponsible developers and apply Section 26(1) of the same act, which has provision for a maximum fine of RM500,000 or two years imprisonment, or both, for the penalty.

He said that as an immediate measure, the state government should issue a stop-work order as well as demand that the developers restore the land to its previous state.

The state government should also call for a public hearing and an independent environmental impact assessment on future development involving environmentally-sensitive land in Penang, he said.

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