

**PKR: No benefits for locals in RM55 billion ECRL**  
**Free Malaysia Today**  
**April 3, 2017**

**Terengganu PKR head says Malaysia has allowed China to dominate the project with its own contractor, workers and financing, making transfer of knowledge and technology impossible.**

PETALING JAYA: Terengganu PKR chairman Azan Ismail has misgivings on what benefits the RM55 billion East Coast Rail Link (ECRL), which passes through the state, would bring to locals in light of China's domineering hand in the project.

The Bandar assemblyman said Malaysia did not even have a say in the appointment of the contractor for the project as the government of China had determined that its national state-owned firm, China Construction Communications Company (CCCC), would be the builder.

"The ECRL project is also not expected to bring much benefit to locals as the Chinese party is expected to bring in its own workers and construction materials from its mainland," he said in a statement today.

"In fact, the situation will keep out local companies and there would be no transfer of knowledge and technology."

He said the scenario showed that Malaysia had begun to be colonised by a foreign power through such domination.

On Nov 1, Malaysia Rail Link Sdn Bhd, an entity set up under the finance ministry, signed the engineering, procurement, construction and commissioning agreement with CCCC and its subsidiary, China Communications Construction Company (M) Sdn Bhd, in Beijing in a ceremony witnessed by Prime Minister Najib Razak and his Chinese counterpart, Li Keqiang.

The rail line will connect Tumpat in northern Kelantan with Gombak in Kuala Lumpur. The four-hour journey will have stops in Kelantan, Terengganu and Pahang.

Azan referred to a written reply by Najib in the Dewan Rakyat that the contractor for the ECRL had been determined by the Chinese government, with CCCC chosen to implement the project.

Najib said Malaysia had been given attractive terms of financing and in exchange China nominated the contractor of its preference for the project

“For me, it is very unfortunate that Malaysia has no right to determine the contractor of our choice in a project on our own soil,” Azan said.

“In my view, this may be the first national strategic project to be completely handed over to a foreign country for implementation.”

Azan also said it appeared that the BN federal government, in becoming indebted to China due to the capital loans it provided, has been silenced from defending Malaysia’s rights in the South China Sea where China is now illegally reclaiming islands.

“Prior to this, Malaysia had sternly protested China’s incursions in territories where there are overlapping claims, such as the Spratly islands, which are being claimed by Southeast Asian countries like Vietnam, Brunei, Taiwan, Indonesia and the Philippines,” he said.

The federal government has also sold off several strategic national assets like Bandar Malaysia and the Tun Razak Exchange to Chinese hands to reduce the burden in debt-riddled state investment fund 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB), he added.

Azan said the ECRL project had cost an excessively high amount and claimed the actual cost should be only half of the RM55 billion.

“The financing from China is in the form of a loan, which means that taxpayers and the future generations will be compelled to pay back this loan taken today by the Malaysian government.”

**Copyright (C) 2009-2016 MToday News Sdn. Bhd. All Rights Reserved.**

Source: <http://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2017/04/03/pkr-no-benefits-for-locals-in-rm55-billion-ecrl/>