

## **Floods: Penang Government Cannot Continue Blaming Weather**

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GEORGE TOWN, Sept 20 (Bernama) -- The DAP-led Penang government cannot keep on blaming the weather and rain each time several areas in the state are hit by flash floods, says Penang Federal Action Council chairman, Datuk Seri Zainal Abidin Osman.

He said the state government should instead realise there were more and more areas that had never been hit by floods before, were now inundated each time there was a heavy downpour.

According to media reports, there were 23 incidents of flash floods across the state occurring between 2015 and September, this year.

"I think this disaster is linked to uncontrolled land development and clearing of hills and hill slopes, as well as sea reclamation."

"I don't deny that there were flash floods before, but nowadays they occur more often, so much so whenever there are dark clouds above, people in Penang get uneasy and worried about being hit by flash floods if it rains heavily," he said in a statement, here, today.

Zainal Abidin, who is also Penang UMNO Liaison Committee chairman, said he welcomed the suggestion that the federal government should cooperate with the state government in solving the frequent flash flood problem, particularly in the Sungai Pinang basin.

He said the federal government had never stopped providing allocations for flood control and mitigation plans in Penang although the state's administration was being led by DAP since 2008.

He noted that the federal government had spent RM2 billion on flood control projects in Penang, namely RM1.493 billion under the 10th Malaysia Plan (10MP) including RM34 million for cleaning and treating Sungai Pinang, and RM404.5 million under the 11MP.

According to him, RM150 million was approved in November, 2016 for the Sungai Pinang Flood Mitigation Project. "Now I want to ask how much have the Penang state government and local authorities spent to overcome the flood problem since DAP started ruling Penang," he said.

Zainal Abidin said the state government required a Flood Prevention Master Plan more than a Transportation Master Plan. "It's because, what's the use of building a good network of roads and other land public transport facilities when the roads and vehicles are submerged in flood waters after a downpour"

"If they (state government) could spend RM305 million just to carry out studies for a project which the people don't need now, why couldn't they spend the same amount on solving the flash flood problem," he added.

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