

Orang Asli customary land needs to be redefined - Rina

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PUTRAJAYA, Aug 17 (Bernama) -- The Rural Development Ministry will discuss with the State Government on the process of gazetting Orang Asli customary land nationwide to secure the community's land ownership rights, said its minister Rina Mohd Harun.

She said among others this would involve amendment of existing laws before the land could be gazetted as Orang Asli customary land.

"The definition customary land needs to be redefined by taking into consideration the legal aspect as not all states recognise the Orang Asli customary land, making it difficult to gazette the land.

"The move will be hastened to ensure that the injustice happening to the Orang Asli groups in Gua Musang, Kelantan can be resolved in the best possible way," she told a press conference after the ministry's monthly gathering and launch of the Merdeka Month Appreciation programme here today.

Rina was commenting on the steps to be taken by the ministry to help the Temiar Orang Asli group at 17 villages in Gua Musang who had to erect barricades to prevent outsiders from encroaching on their land.

Last Friday, Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad assured that he would help solve the problem of the customary land issue in Gua Musang.

Meanwhile, Rina hoped that the Kelantan state government would take serious measures in resolving the issue by simplifying the process to gazette the customary land in the area.

She said although the term Orang Asli customary land does not exist in Kelantan state land law the state government should not take the matter lightly as the community was demanding their rights.

Rina added that ministry officials would be meeting the Kelantan government soon to discuss the crisis including the need to redefine the term customary land.

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