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Journalist	KATHLEEN MICHAEL	AdValue	RM 21,119
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News
 'Better management of People's Housing Projects required >4

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DBKL Housing Management and Community Development enforcement officers conducting checks to weed out the illegal tenants at the Kerinchi Lembah Pantai PPR. — Photos: Filepic

Owners of PPR homes have been told to evict their tenants or risk losing their units altogether.

KUALA LUMPUR

By KATHLEEN MICHAEL
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PEOPLE'S Housing Project (PPR) units have been making headlines in recent weeks following Housing and Local Government Minister Zuraida Kamaruddin's announcement that tenants subletting their units have three months to evict the subtenant.

To-date, there are 127 PPR projects in the country under the ministry.

Eighty six of the projects with 75,054 units are meant to be rented out to suitable candidates, while the other 41 projects with 10,424 units are meant to be sold.

On average, there are about 3,000 to 5,000 families per state who are still waiting for PPR homes from the ministry.

Malaysians, aged 18 and above, with a total household income of less than RM2,500 who do not own a house are eligible to apply for a unit.

However, some PPR tenants are taking advantage of the government initiative by renting their units to derive a profit.

Unit owners are not allowed to sublet to other Malaysians or foreigners, according to the ministry's regulations for the housing units.

National Public Complaints and Welfare Service Centre chairman Datuk A. Chandrakumanan said he raised the issue of units being rented out by tenants to Malaysians or foreigners to Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL).

"PPR units are only for the poor and it is unfair if units are being rented out by tenants.

"We have identified cases where people charge high rents to foreigners or Malaysians. The origi-

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Streamline efforts with state governments and local councils, ministry urged

nal applicant only pays rent of RM124, but charge tenants between RM500 and RM600," said Chandrakumanan.

He said he was recently approached by a subtenant who had been renting a unit for RM600 a month, for the last eight years.

He said the ownership status of those owning PPR units in Kuala Lumpur must be checked to see if they could rent out their flat.

According to Chandrakumanan, those owning a unit in Kuala Lumpur for five years or more can rent their unit out.

"It is cheap to rent a three room flat in the city for RM500 to RM600 so people are willing to pay.

"PPR homes are for those who deserve it and there are many people on the waiting list as there are not enough units," he said, adding that some people at the Jinjang Utara longhouses have been deprived of PPR homes for 27 years.

He also advised applicants to follow up on their application.

A check online revealed that PPR units in the Klang Valley are being advertised for rents of between RM300 and RM800 while those for sale are priced around RM160,000.

Federal and Selangor Community Association (Permas)

president Tan Jo Hann said he came across cases of Jinjang Utara longhouse residents being approached by buyers offering RM150,000 for a PPR unit.

He said there were also cases in Ampang, where some new low-cost units or PPR units were given to local politicians.

"People in the community talked about it," he said.

Tan also questioned how some PPR tenants could afford flashy cars, suggesting that the authorities look into these things.

Apart from misuse of PPR units, he said there should be better management and monitoring of PPRs, by the state and Federal governments.

He said under each Malaysia Plan, a budget is allocated for affordable housing but the ministry should look at how the funds are being spent.

"Even today, many impoverished families are still without permanent homes.

"The ministry should also find out if there are any unoccupied PPR units around and look into arranging bank loans for the poor as this is one of the core issues," he said.

Unit owners, Zuraida said, must get the subletters out of their units,

and failure to do so would see the ministry's enforcement team moving in to evict subletters.

"We will give unit owners notices. If the owners do not come back to us or we cannot locate them and if there are local tenants in the units, then we will offer them the units.

"Regardless whether you have rented or purchased the unit, you are not allowed to rent it out.

"Either you live there or move out," she said.

For PPRs not under its purview, the ministry will liaise with state representatives and local councils to follow suit.

The Petaling Jaya City Council (MBPJ) oversees PPR Lembah Subang and has ongoing operations to identify tenants who have sublet their units.

The city council also follows the practice of offering tenanted units to the subtenant and will proceed to blacklist the original owner.

MBPJ Corporate Communication Deputy Director Abdul Hakim Khairuddin said in 2016, the city council found seven units sublet out including one to foreigners.

From 2015 to 2016, 27 units were taken from the original tenants and given to the subtenant.

One unit was taken back by

MBPJ in 2016.

There are 1,202 families on the waiting list for PPR housing, added Abdul Hakim.

With regards to the issue of legal migrant workers, Zuraida said she will look into accommodations for this group but a structure is needed for monitoring and management purposes.

She said by August, a National Committee Plan would be established where policies, action plans and empowerment programmes especially for the B40 group (the bottom 40% of households with monthly income of RM3,900 and below), will be drawn up.

"I want to provide bigger houses for them because I am concerned with their living conditions and way of life.

"I want them to have proper housing facilities in a comfortable-sized home.

"We will empower the people through training and education. They will learn how to care for their property, and manage cleanliness and the environment," said Zuraida.

The minister also plans to combine all existing housing agencies under one body to better manage housing projects.