

# After explosions, residents call for development freeze to protect Bukit Cerakah

Published 4 days ago on 21 June 2018  
By Jerry Choong



Resident Datuk Fahri Zahni Aminuddin speaks during the press conference at Bukit Bayu in Shah Alam June 21, 2018. — Pictures by Yusof Mat Isa

SHAH ALAM, June 21 — Residents of Bukit Bayu want a moratorium on development works at the nearby Bukit Cerakah Forest Reserve, which they say poses an ecological and land erosion threat.

Resident Nazri Ilyas said the issue has been ongoing for some time, and culminated on Monday when loud explosions could be heard from the forest.

“At first I thought it was someone setting off fireworks. But then I saw dusky leaf monkeys running from branch to branch and I realised something was amiss,” he said during a press conference.

Nazri and several other residents headed to the forest towards a private road originally meant for the public’s use when they went hiking. There they spotted a barrier had been erected.

“Shortly after we arrived two vehicles also arrived. Three men got down and identified themselves as security guards for a ‘contractor’, and ordered us to leave the area,” he said.

As there was no notification signboard announcing any sort of project, Nazri said he and the other residents refused to leave.

“Fortunately the police also arrived at the site, and advised us to file a police report on the same day which we did,” he said.

Fellow resident Datuk Fahri Zahni Aminuddin said following this, he and several other residents first went to the Petaling District Land Office to apply and obtain the titles for the forest.


IN MALAYSIA

**JUST IN** **POPULAR**

1 minute ago  
**Minister: New committee to explore Highland Towers redevelopment**




17 minutes ago  
**FMM donates RM1m to Tabung Harapan Malaysia**



22 minutes ago  
**Former Terengganu MB aids MACC probe into 1MDB**

32 minutes ago  
**Ex-senior official sworn in as Sabah Speaker’s deputy**



52 minutes ago  
**Musa Aman denies sneaking out of country, confirms in UK**



1 hour ago  
**Malaysia mulls new state-of-the-art command centre for disaster management**



“However we were told there are no titles yet. So we had to seek out the Shah Alam City Council but was told the matter fell under the Forestry Department.

“When approached, the Forestry Department informed us this should be handled by MBSA. So currently we are at a loss,” he said, using the abbreviation for the city council.

Fahri said the reserve is Shah Alam’s last remaining lowland forest which houses a number of animal species, some endangered.

“Tapirs and clouded leopards inhabit the forest, and we fear whatever development occurring will increase wildlife-human conflict,” he said, adding that the residents are still trying to find out what kind of development is taking place.

The residents’ efforts are supported by several environmental groups, including the Global Environment Centre (GEC), Treat Every Environment Special, and the Malaysian Nature Society.



Fahri said the reserve is Shah Alam’s last remaining lowland forest which houses a number of animal species, some endangered.

GEC’s forest and coastal programme coordinator R. Nagarajan said anything that disturbed the environmentally sensitive area of the reserve could have dire consequences later.

“Cutting down the trees, some of which are over a century old, leads to land erosion which in turn can cause loss of life and natural features,” he said, citing the 1993 Highland Towers tragedy as an example.

“Not to mention the high costs that the authorities have to spend on rectifying any arising issues. Therefore we ask them to extend the moratorium, which has been in place since 2005, for as long as need be,” he said.

Bukit Anggerik assemblyman Najwan Halimi also supported the residents’ efforts to protect the reserve.

“Since taking office over three weeks ago the issue of ‘forest invasion’ here and elsewhere has proven to be quite serious,

“I will try to propose to the state government to gazette the land. Not only is it ecologically important, it is also a vital rain catchment spot for the area,” he said.

Najwan added any attempts to protect the reserve will be done in accordance with the law.

“If such a thing can happen here, it can happen anywhere. We must ensure the issue does not become a disaster for Bukit Bayu’s residents and the public at large,” he said.