

Flood victims to be relocated permanently

They will move to higher grounds in future, says State Secretary
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By Nancy Lai

KOTA KINABALU: More than 500 families in the flood-prone area of Kinabatangan will be permanently relocated to higher grounds in the future, State Secretary Datuk KY Mustafa said.

Mustafa who is also the State Natural Disaster Committee chairman, said the relocation of these families is part of the long-term solution to the perennial flood problem experienced by the villagers in Kinabatangan.

The State Government, he said, has identified five areas on higher ground between three to four kilometres away from the Kinabatangan river bank for the resettlement of the villagers involved.

He added that the Government wants to relocate these people as soon as possible but the site was not yet ready.

"The land is given by the State Government and the Federal

Government through the Ministry of Rural Development will construct the houses so that will take time," he said when met at the 4th Borneo Biodiversity and Ecosystems Conservation (BBEC) International Conference at the **Universiti Malaysia Sabah** here yesterday.

According to Mustafa, the villagers concerned understood the situation and have agreed to the relocation once the houses are completed. The elected representatives in the areas, Datuk Bung Moktar Radin and Datuk Aklee Abbas, have been very supportive of the Government's plan.

When asked for the latest development on the flood situation in Kinabatangan, he said the river level there is now considered as dangerous as it is above 10.5 meters.

As a preventive measure, villagers along the river have been moved to higher ground and the district natural disaster committee activated.

"We received updates every few hours and everything is under control.

So far no untoward incidents have been reported by the committee," he said.

Mustafa added the river level will continue to rise slightly as it is still raining in the upstream areas.

"We knew that flooding was inevitable due to the wet spell which according to the Meteorological Department, is expected to last until next week," he said.

The State Secretary also said that he would be visiting the flood-affected areas and Kota Marudu which was inundated last week to monitor the situation as well as to see what else needs to be done.

Mustafa also said that the almost annual flooding in Kinabatangan had made the district's natural disaster committee there one of the best in Malaysia.

Meanwhile Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Aman said all district natural disaster committees had been activated and on standby to provide assistance to flood victims.