



Happy bunch: The 11 families showing their offer letters that they got from Raja Nong Chik (standing in the middle in light blue shirt) to rent flat units at the Sri Cempaka public housing project.

Good news for squatters

11 families receive letters to move into low-cost flats

Story and photos
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WHEN their squatter village caught fire last year, Lewis Anthony Joseph and his wife Undra Devi Balakrishnan were forced to stay put in their badly burnt home.

They had no place to go to despite being promised low-cost flats by the Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) in July last year.

The Kg Tepi Sungai squatter colony in Jalan Pantai Baru, Lembah Pantai, has been in existence for some 40 years.

"For more than 20 years, we have been waiting to move," said Joseph, 29.

Joseph and his family are among the 16 remaining families in Kg Tepi Sungai who were left out in the relocation process.

However, on Tuesday night, Federal Territories Minister Raja Datuk Nong Chik Raja Zainal Abidin handed out offer letters to 11 of the 16 families to move into the Sri Cempaka public housing project during a simple presentation ceremony held at the Lembah Pantai Umno division office.

"When I got wind that there are families in this area still left out, I went down and saw the bad conditions they were staying in.

"My thought was that they definitely needed to move out from the area into proper flats. So after speaking to the DBKL, we finally managed to allocate units to these

needy families," said Raja Nong Chik, who is also the Lembah Pantai Umno division chairman.

It is learnt that the squatter village was originally made up of some 40 families but half of the number have already been relocated much earlier.

Asked why the DBKL had sat on the relocation for the remaining families for so long, Raja Nong Chik said the 16 families were probably living on private land then and hence not given the priority to relocate.

"I think perhaps it was the government policy then to give priority to those residing on government land. But seeing the welfare and condition of these remaining families, the relocation had to be attended to urgently," he said.

Raja Nong Chik assured the remaining five families that their offer letters would be given by this week.

The 11 families drew lots on Monday and are expected to get their keys next week.

For Joseph and Undra, they seemed happy and thankful for the chance to rent the flat, and later, to be able to buy and own it.

"Every time there is a down-pour, our house would be flooded. And just last Thursday, a coconut tree fell on our roof and damaged our home.

"At least now, we have a flat unit which we are planning to buy when made available later," said the couple, who both work at a private hospital.