

Business groups slam walkway takeover by eateries in KL

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THREE major business associations have sounded the alarm over the growing takeover of public walkways by eateries and roadside stalls.

They said what started as a few makeshift setups had spiralled into a chronic problem, blocking pedestrian routes and turning city pavements into commercial space.

They added that the trend was not only spreading but taking root, with some food stalls treating public footpaths as private dining areas.

“I can’t even count how many complaints we have received on this issue.

“I wrote to the mayor (Datuk Seri Maimunah Mohd Sharif) back in February, but sad to say, there is no response,” said Kuala Lumpur Hawkers and Petty Traders Association chairman Datuk Seri Ang Say Tee.

“No one is following the law, and there is zero enforcement,”



A worker from a roadside stall in Brickfields putting tables and chairs on a road with yellow markings meant to inform motorists to slow down.

he added.

Ang was responding to *StarMetro*'s frontpage report “Eateries prioritise profits over public safety in KL” yesterday over the proliferation of eateries and traders placing tables, chairs and goods on public walkways.

He said it not only obstructed pedestrians but undermined fair business practices.

Brickfields Business Community Society vice-president Datuk Alagarsamy Kumar said the issue was less of a problem among

established restaurants.

“I pay over RM100,000 a year in taxes; we don’t want to risk our business by breaking the law.

“But there are some operators in Brickfields who blatantly flout the rules,” he said.

Alagarsamy said Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) has clear standard operating procedures on the placement of tables and chairs outside eateries.

“Another serious issue is the increase in the number of roadside stalls and food trucks now putting up tables and chairs on public roads,” he noted.

“What is disconcerting is that at least 40% of these businesses are run by foreigners,” he added.

Malaysian Federation of Hawkers and Petty Traders Association president Datuk Seri Rosli Sulaiman said DBKL needed to make its laws and regulations clearer, and enforce them.

“They cannot say it is prohibited and then turn a blind eye when it happens.

“Food trucks are meant to

operate on a takeaway basis; why are some being allowed to have dine-in options?” he queried.

“The rules have to be clear, and they must be enforced properly.

“Regardless of small traders or big restaurants, everyone has to follow the same law.

“DBKL cannot pick and choose who and when they want to enforce it,” said Rosli.

Brickfields resident Dr Christopher Nicholas said he understood that a special committee made up of representatives from various DBKL departments decided whether eateries could place tables and chairs outside their premises.

“More often than not, representatives from the Urban Transport and Health departments do not support traders operating on walkways or tactile pavements.

“But we are seeing licences given to stall operators to put up what are essentially structures on public pavements,” said Dr Nicholas.