

# NGOs gather signatures for MRT line realignment

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ABOUT 250 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) from several states have endorsed the call for the Sungai Buloh-Kajang Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) line to be realigned from Jalan Sultan to Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock.

The organisations lent their signatures to a campaign launched by the Save Jalan Sultan Committee yesterday, hoping to pressure the government and project owner MRT Corporation to consider the realignment.

The committee aims to get organisations to support its call for the rail route to be realigned and, subsequently, averting the possible loss of several buildings with heritage value along the street.

Committee co-chairman Yong Yew Wei said the committee hopes to get another 300 organisations to endorse its call by the end of this month.

“We will submit the peti-

tion to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak and Minister in the Prime Minister’s Department Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz.”

“We will also proceed to call for a discussion with the government and MRT Corp over the realignment,” he added.

Although MRT Corp officials have rejected requests from the committee for a discussion over realignment, Yong remains optimistic that such a discussion would be held.

Committee co-chairman Tan Yew Sing said various organisations from Penang, Malacca, Negri Sembilan and Johor had endorsed the call for the MRT route to be realigned to Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock.

When pointed out that MRT Corporation CEO Datuk Azhar Abdul Hamid had defended the construction of the proposed underground tunnel at Jalan Sultan, Tan said it was Azhar’s opinion, not the government.

“Since the realignment is a viable option, we will talk to someone else who has the



authority to take action,” he added.

The committee established to defend the rights of landowners along the street who will be affected by the MRT project, had proposed the MRT line to be realigned to Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock due to the road’s larger width compared to the narrow Jalan Sultan.

However, in a report in an online news portal last week, Azhar had said there was no reason for several landowners to seek realignment as the underground tunnels would not result in a change of landscape in the area.

Jalan Sultan land owners had discovered their properties would be demolished to make way for the MRT when Syarikat Prasarana Negara Berhad (then project owner) carried out a briefing in August last year.

Since then, the landowners have been opposing the possible acquisition and demolition of buildings in the area, some of which have heritage value.

During meetings however, MRT Corporation had assured landowners their properties would not be acquired, but they would need to move out for six months during the

**BIG NO:** Members of NGO gathers to show their support for the MRT line to be realigned to Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock — Pic: ASHRAF SHAMSUL AZLAN

construction period and will be compensated for doing so.

Azhar had reportedly reiterated this after signing an agreement with project delivery partner MMC-Gamuda Joint Venture Sdn Bhd and the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) on Feb 10.

He had also said the corporation would help gazette the street as a heritage area.