

# No one signed mutual agreement, says group

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THE Preserve Jalan Sultan Committee said it is untrue that only two property owners in Jalan Sultan, Petaling Street, do not agree with the terms and conditions given by the Mass Rapid Transit Corporation (MRT Corp) in the mutual agreement.

Its chairman, Yong Yew Wei, said none of the affected owners had signed the mutual agreement.

He said it was misleading and unprofessional of MRT Corp chief executive officer Datuk Azhar Abdul Hamid to single out two owners and urge them to sign the document before the end of February.

"MRT Corp has not disclosed the social impact studies to the public to convince them that the alignment along Jalan Sultan is the best option. It has also not provided reasons on why it cannot realign the route," he said at the Kuala Lumpur and Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall yesterday.

"It has not been able to guarantee the buildings will be safe from destruction and furthermore, the Land Public Transport Commission (SPAD) and Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk

Ahmad Mazlan stated earlier there is no guarantee the owners will be able to keep their properties upon completion of the tunnelling," he said.

On Azhar's statement that a compulsory land acquisition would take place should the traders reject MRT Corp's proposal to complete mutual agreement negotiations, Yong said it was like "tying a rope on the traders' necks".

Lok Ann Hotel owner Thomas Tan said they could not use acquisition to pressure the traders into signing the mutual agreement.

The traders said points of agreement touched on the period to vacate, cost of relocation and use of alternative premises and joint surveys before and after the construction to determine whether the buildings are safe for reoccupation.

"What will happen if the buildings are proclaimed as unsafe? Will they acquire the buildings then?" Yong asked.

He said requests to have a meeting with MRT Corp in the past six months were ignored and the committee had no chance to present their realignment proposal in detail.

He added that the committee had therefore decided not to negotiate

with MRT Corp further and would seek a meeting with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

"Najib commented earlier that the Government is willing to listen to the people and discuss realignment if necessary.

"We have received endorsement from more than 300 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the country. The NGOs have also started a nationwide signature campaign to save Jalan Sultan and support realignment. We will submit their endorsements to Najib soon. We hope he will personally resolve this matter," he said.

Yong said Plaza Warisan, UDA Ocean and Klang Bus Station would be demolished first if MRT Corp decided to begin construction work.

"If they realign the MRT route, these three buildings will be preserved, too," he said.

Yong also lashed out at the way MRT Corp collected feedback from the public by erecting a board at the former UDA Ocean Mall in Jalan Sultan.

"Instead of providing a proper place for the public to sit down and write their thoughts, they put up the board at a busy junction. It showed

they are not sincere in gathering the public's views," he said.

Khong Kim Lyew, the famous Kwong Fook Wing Tailor, said he noticed that negative remarks were erased from the board.

Also present at the press conference were Bukit Bintang MP Fong Kui Lun, Tan, Yan Keng Benevolent Dramatic Association secretary-general Ng Siak Wing and Kuala Lumpur Gospel Hall elder Jimmy Chok.

Fong said realignment was the better option as it would not affect tourism in Jalan Sultan.

Yong also urged the Government to restructure MRT Corp and SPAD in keeping with the "People first, Performance now" philosophy.

When contacted MRT Corp declined to comment.

It was reported that MRT Corp would not acquire or demolish the shoplots in Jalan Sultan.

In its earlier statements, MRT Corp requested for the residents to be relocated for a maximum of six months as part of the agreement.

It stressed that with no acquisition or demolition, the heritage of Chinatown would remain intact, and with the station, the benefits to the area would be tremendous.