

# 200 squatters live in landslide danger area

## Residents' group urges authorities to rehouse affected families before the beginning of the rainy season

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**M**ore than 200 squatters are living in the shadow of disaster because of a delay in finishing safety work on a dangerous slope before the rainy season.

A spokesman for the Lei Yue Mun Residents' Association, Wong Tai, said yesterday three families were still living just below a steep cliff on which a landslide occurred last August.

Now he fears people on the

Kwun Tong estate could be in danger if nothing is done to speed up the clearance project before the wet season begins.

Wong said nobody was injured in the landslide last year but about 150 residents were evacuated to a nearby community centre.

Since then, Wong said the Civil Engineering Department has designated areas of imminent and potential danger. The Housing Department has already issued eviction orders for those 30 households who live within the imminent danger area.

Most of them accepted the offer of a public housing flat before the lunar new year. But three families have stayed put because they were not entitled to public housing.

"The matter is very complicated. Because they had not been registered on the Housing Department's squatter list in 1984, they were only allowed to be rehoused in temporary housing," Wong said.

The deadline for the removal of the three households is April 25.

Wong said there might not

be sufficient time for the families to bargain with the Housing Department.

He said the situation was no better for the other 200 residents who lived within the potential danger area.

"Nothing has been done by the Civil Engineering Department to repair the slope since the landslide occurred last year. I am afraid that a landslide will recur after a heavy rainfall," Wong said.

He said the Housing Department should help rehouse all the affected squatters in the area.

But the decision whether to stay or leave posed a dilemma for many people.

"For some, they have invested so much in the squatter [flat] that they insist on staying in the area. They have nurtured a sense of belonging through the years," Wong said.

Forty per cent of the popula-

tion in Lei Yue Mun are new immigrants from the mainland. They want to be rehoused in a public housing estate as soon as possible.

Wong said the Lei Yue Mun Residents Association had not forced any resident to move from the area. But the sooner the clearance project is finished, the better it would be for them.

Last year, three people were killed in two separate landslides on August 13 following one of the territory's biggest downpours on record.

Chow Wai-keung, 16, was crushed to death in Chai Wan as a 30-metre section of a hillside gave way, engulfing the teenager as he walked along Fei Tsui Road.

In Aberdeen hours earlier, an American, Paul Boulter, 43, and his Indian girlfriend, Sonali Singh, were buried as they slept when a hillside in Shum Wan collapsed.

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