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24-year-old dispute still unresolved

More than 24 years after their homes were demolished, former villagers of a cottage area in Tai Hang Sai are still seeking compensation.

And yesterday, 13 representatives of the 147 families petitioned Government House for the disclosure of a document concerning their rights to claim compensation.

The representatives claim that since the cottages were demolished in 1959, the families have not been resettled in the reconstructed buildings of the area as stated in their contract with the developer — the Hongkong Settlers Housing Corpn Ltd.

They claim that the families, now resettled in Pak Tin estate, have received no compensation.

One representative, Mr Ngo Dao-kei, said the document — signed by the Government and the developer in 1959 — provided legal grounds for their claims of compensation.

He claims the document states that the Government promised the company sites on which it could construct nine-storey buildings as compensation for the villagers.

Mr Ngo said they first approached the Government in 1982. Since then, they have also petitioned various departments for the release of the document.

Mr Ngo said they were told that it would be difficult to gain access to the document because of the time-span.

He said the cottages were purchased in 1952 from the developer.

Their contracts stated that the Government would rehouse the families in a resettlement estate if the cottages were demolished within 10 years, he said.

However, after clearance the villagers were neither resettled nor compensated, Mr Ngo said.