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Agony of life in 2 sq metres

ABOUT 100 residents with an average personal living area of less than two square metres in a estate in Kwai Chung yesterday took to the streets to protest their housing conditions.

If the Housing Authority does not give them a suitable reply within this week, the residents from Shek Lei estate said they may petition Omelco and the Ombudsman.

The protestors, led by Kwai Tsing District Board chairman Mr Lee Wing-tat, and board member Mr Lee Siu-kei, are from families sharing an average area of less than 3.25 square metres each, the Housing Authority standard.

A board representative said there were more than 2,000 households in Shek Lei living in such cramped conditions. Of that total, 400 households are living with an average personal area of less than 2.23 square metres. He said his office had re-

ceived more than 1,000 complaints. One extreme example is a household of five members living in an average personal area of less than two square metres.

Armed with banners and placards and chanting slogans such as "Flats like pigeon cages" and "Living conditions in Shek Lei inhumane", the protesting residents yesterday petitioned the two estate managers in Shek Lei.

They want the Housing Authority to provide them with at least 350 flats a year from other estates and reserve flats which are still available in their own housing estate.

The residents were also angry with the speed of flat renewal.

They claimed there were more than 200 empty flats in Shek Lei estate.

Many of the units had been lying idle for three or four years awaiting renewal, the estate residents said.