

OLD TYRES

ILLEGAL DUMP SITE A DENGUE HAZARD

A NON-GOVERNMENTAL organisation in Semenyih has claimed that a tyre dumping ground has turned into a breeding ground for mosquitoes that poses a threat to residents and the environment.

Gagasan Prihatin Semenyih (GPS) secretary Hamdan Abu said thousands of old tyres were dumped at the site, in an industrial area in Batu 23, Jalan Sungai Lalang.

"Each tyre in a yard, if improperly stored, can become a breeding ground for thousands of mosquitoes, which can carry life-threatening diseases such as dengue fever," Hamdan said during a visit to the area on Monday.

"Tyres are filled with water after a downpour. The water is retained as the inner part of the tyres are shaded, thus preventing evaporation."

He said the site, which had been operating for some time, was illegal and not approved by the local government.

He added that more tyres were dumped even after GPS highlighted the problem to the

authorities in August last year. "This must be taken seriously as there was a spike in dengue cases in Hulu Langat.

"Furthermore, Selangor recorded the highest number of dengue cases in the country last year due to poor management of waste collection, leading to a dengue epidemic."

He warned that tyres were non-biodegradable and had high flammability and chemical composition that could lead to leaching of toxic substances into the ground. They also released hazardous fumes when burned.

Semenyih Fire and Rescue Department chief Zainal Elias Abdul Aziz said in the event that the tyres caught fire, fire-fighters would need at least five water tenders to control the blaze.

"Looking at the numbers, it will take us days to get it under control."

Present during the visit were officials from the Health Ministry.

A ministry official, Dr Mohd Hanif Zailani, said an investi-



Hamdan Abu



Dr Mohd Hanif Zailani



A Health Ministry official inspecting the discarded tyres in Batu 23, Jalan Sungai Lalang, Semenyih. PIC BY ROSELA ISMAIL

gation paper was filed recently. "The paper had been submitted to the Attorney-General's Chambers for action."

The case is being investigated under the Destruction of Disease-Bearing Insects Act 1975.

A RM500 compound will be issued under Section 25 of the Act if Aedes mosquito larvae were found in the premises.

Under Section 23, those who fail to pay the compound could be fined RM10,000 or jailed up to two years for the first offence,

while repeat offenders could be fined up to RM50,000 or jailed up to five years.

ACTIONLINE:

The operator of the dump site, who wished to be known only as Choong, was issued a fine in August last year, which he promptly settled. He is now relocating the old tyres to another site, following the instructions from the Kajang Municipal Council.

Choong claimed that measures had been taken to prevent the dump site from turning into a breeding ground for mosquitoes.

"Insecticide is sprayed on the tyres to repel mosquitoes," said Choong, who is from Triang, Pahang.

He said more time was needed to relocate all the tyres, which number about 5,000.

The old tyres are used as raw material to make floor mats.