

Govt rebuts ex-UN rep, will announce new poverty rate based on 2019 methodology

Putrajaya today rebutted the [accusation](#) of former UN special rapporteur Philip Alston that it was backtracking on the previous Pakatan Harapan administration's commitment to revise the national poverty line.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Economy) Mustapa Mohamed (*above*) said the government has adopted a 2019 methodology to measure the country's poverty line income.

"We have (previously) been using the 2005 methodology which is based on the poverty line of RM980 per month per household," he told the press at Putrajaya.

"Our per capita income has increased more than double to RM40,000 per person from RM20,000 in 2005. So, it is impossible for the poverty line income to continue to stay at RM980," Mustapa said.

The government expected the new poverty rate to be higher as compared with 0.4 percent currently, he said.

"Definitely, we will get a higher quantum on the poverty line income. Secondly, the poverty rate will be higher than 0.4 percent," said the minister.

He assured that the latest poverty rate will be announced soon and that he would brief the cabinet on the announcement of the poverty rate tomorrow.

Yesterday, Alston claimed the government was backtracking on its predecessors' commitment to take the poverty issue seriously.

Alston previously made headlines for suggesting that actual poverty is much higher than the national 0.4 percent rate, said his current view is based on PN's response to the final report of findings from his trip to Malaysia last August.

Alston was in Malaysia from last August 11 to Aug 23 and former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad had, in an initial response at the time, said the government will study claims that the actual poverty rate is closer to 15 percent.

Elaborating further, Mustapa said the government had started the process of revisiting the outdated poverty line income back in August 2018.

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