

December 2022

PRESS STATEMENT

BATANG KALI LANDSLIDE : - CONTROL AND MONITOR HILL SLOPE DEVELOPMENT

Malaysian Geotechnical Society (MGS) is deeply saddened by the recent Batang Kali Landslide at an organic farm and camping site, which resulted in more than 20 fatalities on 16th December 2022.

Whilst some landslides are natural and undesirable occurrences on natural/undeveloped hill-slopes that can potentially pose danger to the human life and cause damage to infrastructures in their vicinity, MGS is of the opinion that such disasters / geohazard risks to life loss may be avoided or at least mitigated with proper engineering input taken into considerations especially in man-made slopes or slopes in the vicinity of major infrastructures or public spaces are assessed by qualified and experienced geotechnical engineers. In the event of exposure to such risk is unavoidable, the population and elements at risk shall be informed on the inherent risk and educated to handle the risk if incident happens.

A comprehensive investigation will need to be carried out to determine the cause of the landslide with input from different experts ranging from geotechnical engineers, geologists, hydrologists, etc. with the aim of making public the findings. MGS are concerned with various “causes” of the landslide being reported in the media which will further confuse the public. In addition, MGS urges the Government of Malaysia to take positive steps to establish relevant guidelines on such camping or farmstay development which are increasingly popular and normally located in high-risk areas such as hill-slopes, waterfalls or rivers.

With the duty bound role, MGS wishes to offer technical assistance with our pool of expert members in slope engineering and provide views and opinions in the investigation, and to advise possible improvement of existing guidelines on slope management. As a learned society with majority of our members being specialist geotechnical engineers (specialised in slope stability, soil mechanics, forensic landslide investigation, etc.) and affiliated to several international engineering organisations, MGS is recognised locally and internationally as the learned society representing the geotechnical fraternity in Malaysia, with many of its members having experience in slope stability assessment, landslide investigation, etc. who will be able to offer their expert opinions on this unfortunate and sad event.

Finally, MGS wishes to express our condolences to all the families of the victims who perished in the landslide. We are sad that such a tragedy has occurred especially over the school holidays period affecting families and children. Our thoughts and prayers are with you in such difficult time.

Malaysian Geotechnical Society

For further information on this Press Release or Malaysian Geotechnical Society (MGS), kindly contact the MGS Secretariat at mgs@mygeosociety.com