

Council out to dislodge illegal homestay business

by [tan sin chow](#)

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GEORGE TOWN: An apartment owner at the Gurney Park condominium in Kelawai Road has been slapped with a RM250 compound by the Penang Island City Council for carrying out an illegal lodging business.

A woman, said to be a South Korean, had claimed that the unit belonged to her relatives when a team from the council's Commissioner of Buildings, Licensing Department and Building Department visited the unit yesterday.

The team also went to two other units but nobody opened the door.

Tanjong MP Ng Wei Aik, who was also present, said there were 588 condominium units on the two blocks and about 16 unit owners were said to be involved in the illegal lodging business.

"Out of the 16 units, we believe eight are active in this business.

"Some of them are said to be the 'pioneer' in running such activities, going back to 2010," he said.

Ng said the council issued the compound under the 1991 MPPP bylaw for Trade, Business and Industries for operating an illegal lodging house.

Errant operators can be fined a maximum of up to RM2,000, imprisonment of up to one year, or both, upon conviction.

"Right now, the council is contemplating on prosecuting two owners in court.

"Once they are charged, it will be the first in the state," he said.

Ng said only serviced apartments were allowed to operate homestays or short stays.

"All residential apartments, condominiums, flats and gated residential houses are not allowed to carry out these lodging business," he said.

