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THE number of hardcore poor families rose by some 100,000 over the past two years, says Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Economy) Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed.

He said according to government data, 44,829 heads of household were categorised as hardcore poor in 2020.

"However, based on the subsequent use of the income poverty line methodology 2019 and impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of hardcore poor rose to 144,932 heads of household as at June 30, 2022," he said in response to a question from Datuk Mohd Fasih Mohd Fakeh (PN-Sabak Bernam) in the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

To address this, he said the government has implemented a programme to end hardcore poverty by 2025.

**"The Malaysian Family Hardcore Poverty Eradication programme will be implemented in 1,000 localities in three to six months."**

Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed

He said the Malaysian Family Hardcore Poverty Eradication (BMTKM) programme was aimed at assisting current hardcore poor eradication programmes to tackle the issue of poverty across ethnic lines.

"BMTKM will be implemented in 1,000 localities in three to six months. The first phase was imple-

mented in June involving 80 localities as a pilot programme," he added.

Mustapa said the goal of the programme was to raise the monthly income of hardcore poor families by between RM300 and RM1,000 through various economic activities.

He added that the programme

was closely monitored at the district and branch levels.

He said officers monitoring the programme are required to give a monthly progress report and intervene if necessary.

Mustapa cited an example under the programme involving 35 hardcore poor families in Kampung Sungai Lias, Sabak Bernam.

He said RM340,000 was allocated for economic activities there.

Meanwhile, Mustapa said the determination of hardcore poor was not only based on the median income of a household but involves the use of a multidimensional poverty index.

Mustapa was responding to Datuk Seri Ahmad Maslan (BN-Pontian) whether "relative poverty" is also considered in determining the poverty level of a household.