

'Students made to collect RM100 from Umno building'
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by Aidila Razak

PKR Ampang MP Zuraida Kamaruddin today claimed that students from a primary school in Ampang were brought to the Umno building there before the RM100 aid was disbursed through the division head.

Speaking at a press conference today, Zuraida claimed that approximately 100 students were taken to the Umno building on Jalan Bukit Belacan for the ceremony this morning

bukit antarabangsa landslide 071209 zuraida kamaruddin According to Zuraida (left), the aid was disbursed by Ampang Umno division head Ismail Kijo, who had also visited other schools to give the money out on site.

"Last week I had school principals and parents call me to complain that he had come to the school to disburse the aid.

"This is the rakyat's money so at least the minister, deputy minister or a government staff should be disbursing it, not the division head of Umno Ampang in the Umno building," she said.

However, the grainy photographs shown by the MP depicted a man who looks like Ismail on stage, handing out what looked like envelopes to adults.

The banner behind him reads: 'Hari Anugerah Kecemerlangan 2011' (Excellence Award Day 2011).

When contacted, Umno Ampang chief Ismail Kijo confirmed the event but said it was "purely coincidental".

"The school had planned the Awards Day for a while and it coincided with the day which they wanted to disburse the financial aid," he said.

He said that the principal had opted to rent the hall in the Umno building as the school hall is in bad shape and has poor ventilation.

"The school rented it for RM400 as they wanted the parents to feel comfortable during the ceremony," he said.

Ismail added that he had in fact handed over a mock cheque to a parent-teacher association representative and that the actual cash will be disbursed by the school.

"I follow the school's requests. If they want to disburse it in their premises then I will go there," he said.

Ministry directive

A directive from Ministry of Education secretary general Rosli Mohamed dated Nov 11 states that "elected representatives, including members of parliaments, state assemblypersons or leaders from the federal government" are to be present during the disbursement of the aid.

Rosli said that his was decided upon in the cabinet meeting on Oct 28.

“This is as the financial aid is a touch point between the government and the rakyat,” he said.

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak had during the Budget 2012 speech last month announced that all school-going children will receive RM100 aid.

The ministry however clarified that the funds will not come from the 2012 federal budget, while students began receiving the cash last week.

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