

'Bulk of gov't fund only to tackle fear of crime'
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By Ahmad Fadli KC

The government is taking the wrong approach by spending 71 percent of its crime-busting budget under the government transformation programme (GTP) on managing perception - rather than on the reduction of crime.

PKR president Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail claimed that a whopping RM170 million of the budget for the national key result area (NKRA) to reduce crime this year is being used to tackle "fear of crime".

At the same time, Wan Azizah said, the government has allocated 3.67 percent of its funds to reduce break-ins and car thefts, 11.27 percent to cut down street crimes, 2.75 percent to bring criminals to justice and 11.25 percent to increase public satisfaction with the police.

"The government is insincere as it is only focusing on perception," she said, referring to estimated allocation detailed in the 2012 budget for the Home Ministry.

Referring to the GTP annual report 2011, PKR investment and trade bureau chief Wong Chen said the government only measured perception of crime and fear of crime twice last year.

'Money for commercial airtime?'

Speaking alongside Wan Azizah, Wong said this raised questions as to how the RM170 million was spent and its efficacy, "especially since we are now in the second half of 2012".

"Are they using the money to buy commercial airtime? We don't know. Pakatan Rakyat ceramah only cost RM300 (per event)," he quipped.

Wong said the government should instead spend 70 percent of its funds to bring down crime and utilise the balance to manage perception.

PKR had previously urged the government to stop spending time spying on the rakyat and instead, put its resources to combating crime.

It had said this based on a report that the police special branch had opened 733,000 investigation papers, while the crime investigation department opened less than a third of that - at 212,000 papers - last year.

Meanwhile, asked about speculation that she will contest a state seat in the coming general election, Wan Azizah said she was mulling the matter.

"I am qualified to contest a state seat, but we are still discussing which is seat is most suitable," she said.