

Selangor MB urges Bersih to 'check facts' beforehand
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The caretaker Selangor Menteri Besar Abdul Khalid Ibrahim has urged electoral reform pressure group Bersih to first check its facts prior to "casting any aspersions" on the state administration in the latter's capacity as a caretaker government.

In rejecting Bersih's 'name and shame' list, which alleged several code of conduct violations by Khalid's caretaker administration, he said the state had merely carried out decisions made by its executive committee prior to the dissolution of its legislative assembly.

"The caretaker government had merely implemented decisions made earlier to ensure that the interest and welfare of the people of Selangor are protected during the caretaker period," Khalid (left) said in a statement today.

"It must be stressed that the decisions and actions conducted are thus not tantamount to canvassing for votes.

"The state government hopes that Bersih will ascertain all the facts and legal details before casting any aspersions."

The Pakatan Rakyat-run administration was constantly mindful, he stressed, not to abuse public funds for campaign purposes for the fast-approaching general election.

Yesterday, Bersih's special election violations watchdog sub-committee, which monitors the federal and all state governments, listed three alleged violations by the Pakatan-led state caretaker government:

Khalid's handing out of RM300 bonuses to state employees on April 4, one day after the dissolution of parliament.

An additional RM2.46 million allocation for the neighbourhood safety programme on April 5.

Villagers in Bestari Jaya given land titles and Khalid offering to assist those who were unable to pay for the premium.

The sub-committee co-chairperson Irene Fernandez reportedly deemed the acts as

"tantamount to vote-buying".

'Khalid's bodyguard still has to accompany him'

On the use of state vehicles, Khalid said the state legal advisor has stated that the caretaker government still has "access to all public properties, tools and machineries in running their daily duties and attending public interest programmes".

"However, the access cannot be abused for political purposes. For example, official vehicles and government premises cannot be used as election campaign tools."

Meanwhile, when contacted, his political secretary Faekah Husin told Malaysiakini that although the state assembly has dissolved, Khalid's official bodyguard will still be trailing him in a vehicle belonging to the state, including to political functions.

Khalid and Faekah were referring to a sports utility vehicle carrying the label 'Office of the State Secretary of Selangor' that was spotted at a PKR ceramah two days ago in Bandar Tun Razak.

"This looks like a state vehicle used for (Khalid's) official bodyguard who has the duty to follow him everywhere.

"Although Khalid was at a political function, he is still the menteri besar and therefore has to be accompanied by a bodyguard," she said when asked if the usage of the vehicle constituted abuse of power.

"Prior to the dissolution, our office had referred the issue to the state legal adviser on caretaker government and officers of the menteri besar have been properly briefed on their functions and limitations as the officers to the menteri besar," she said.