

Compensate victims of antenna crash, Umno told

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By Susan Loone

Penang PAS wants Umno to compensate the people injured and owners of vehicles that were damaged in the massive storm that hit George Town yesterday and caused a huge antenna to fall off the top of the Penang Umno headquarters on Jalan Macalister.

The incident caused the death of one person, injured five others, with the strong winds wrecking havoc in the other parts of Penang as well. Another person died in Air Itam, after being hit by a falling tree.

NONEState PAS Youth secretary Afnan Taib Azimuddin (right) said Umno leaders should not just be praying that no one was injured.

Afnan was referring to a Malaysiakini report last night quoting state Umno Youth chief Shaik Hussein Mydin as expressing sympathy to those affected by the incident.

Describing the incident as "a natural disaster and accident", Shaik Hussein expressed hope that no one was harmed by it.

He left it to the state Umno leadership to decide whether the party should compensate those injured.

Deputy Penang Umno chief Musa Sheikh Fadzir when contacted said he was at the scene until 2am today.

"I am now visiting the victims who were injured by the incident. I cannot comment further than this at the moment," Musa said when asked whether the state Umno would compensate the victims.

NONEHe also expressed sympathy to the family of Jahir Hussain Sulaiman, 46, who was killed by the falling antenna. Jahir was co-driver in the lorry carrying cooking gas cylinders, on which the antenna landed.

Afnan said in a statement: "We also urge the Penang Islamic Affairs Council (MAIPP), which has been renting space in the Umno building, to relocate to another place that is more safe, with more space and comfort.

"This is the time when MAIPP, the highest Islamic institution in Penang should have its own complex, without having to rent from Umno Penang, which appears to be waiting for time to collapse."

Afnan expressed regret that the incident occurred just one week after a ramp collapse at the Penang second bridge, killing one person.

He said the accident showed that the Umno building, which rents out offices to private companies, is "depleted and its safety is not guaranteed".

NONEHe urged the state Umno to immediately take appropriate steps to investigate the incident and to ensure the safety of the 21-storey building.

"The occupants should vacate their premises until everything is declared safe," Afnan suggested.

MAIPP president Salleh Man (left) said no one is currently allowed to enter the Umno building. He was also thankful that nobody one was around last night when the building was hit by strong winds.

"We hope to visit the building on Monday. It is now closed to public," Salleh said.

The state executive councillor in charge of Islamic affairs, Abdul Malik Kassim, confirmed that there had been plans to shift the MAIPP premises to another space.

"Yes, we had plans about it quite some time back," Malik said, adding that it was an ongoing effort to bring all Islamic religious departments in the state together.