

## **'PKR, Umno or PAS, zakat aid applicants asked'**

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PAS has condemned the Johor Islamic Affairs Council (MAIJ) for allegedly making students seeking zakat (tithe) aid answer questions of a "political nature".

Among others, PAS Youth chief Suhaizan Kaiat said, students studying in Egypt were asked if PKR, PAS or Umno is better.

He said the students were also asked who is a better leader - BN chairperson Najib Abdul Razak or PAS spiritual leader Nik Aziz Nik Mat.

"Such questions of political nature are wrong and should not be asked during an interview to determine if one deserves zakat aid.

"From what the students tell us, it seems that their political leaning is part of a hidden requirement that caused them to miss out on zakat aid," Suhaizan (right) said in a statement this morning.

The students were reportedly interviewed by a MAIJ delegation to Egypt.

Eight students who said they met published criteria to receive zakat aid found themselves not in the final list of recipients sent to MAIJ.

Earlier, MAIJ rebutted claims by several Johor-born students in Egypt that they did not receive zakat (tithe) aid due to poor management.

MAIJ: Students didn't qualify

Contacted yesterday, MAIJ said that the council has never had problems disbursing aid to Johor-born students in Egypt.

MAIJ Islamic affairs officer Raja Azhar Raja Ariff said aid from zakat funds for students in Egypt is handed over to the student affairs coordinator, who then disburses it to deserving students.

"We issue the aid based on the list given by the student affairs coordinator (HEP) and the payment is done through the HEP office.

"Students will collect the payments at the HEP office in Egypt and this has gone on smoothly every year," Raja Azhar told Malaysiakini.

He added that if a student did not receive any aid, it would be because he or she does not

meet the criteria.

Raja Azhar said the matter has already been resolved and the students who complained have been informed.

He was commenting on complaints made by tertiary students in Johor who told Malaysiakini that they did not get the zakat aid.

The Johor-born students claimed that this was due to inefficient management in MAIJ.

One student claimed that he did not receive aid after failing his third year examinations.

However, the aid was not resumed after he passed in the re-sit.

Eight students also claimed that they attended interviews in order to get the aid, including four meetings with the Johor executive councillor in charge of Islamic affairs last March, but received no feedback.

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