

PM has 'blank cheque to spend' public funds

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By Ram Anand

The government's refusal to detail Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's highly publicised vacation in the United States last December is akin to giving him a "blank cheque" to spend as much taxpayers' money as he wants, an MP said today.

Despite repeated questions in Parliament about the trip, which Najib cut short to tend to the Kelantan floods, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Shahidan Kassim merely replied that Najib had spent "according to what is allowed" and "appropriately", DAP's Seremban MP Anthony Loke Siew Fook (right) told a press conference today.

"What is the qualification limit for Najib to spend? As far as we know, there is no statute anywhere stating a limit for the PM's expenditure. This is a blank cheque for the prime minister," Loke said.

The government executive jet 9M-NAA was used by Najib and his family for their US trip, which included a golf game with US President Barack Obama.

While Najib cut his vacation short, the jet made a trip around the world, according to flight tracker FlightRadar 24, before returning to Malaysia.

The government had, previously, revealed that the cost for the travel to Qatar by Najib's wife Rosmah Mansor, using the government jet in 2013, was more than RM400,000.

Loke said since that answer triggered a reaction, the Prime Minister's Department has chosen to remain silent on all subsequent questions pertaining to the prime minister's spending.