

PM: Yapeim can act against unfounded statements

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The Malaysian Islamic Economic Development Foundation (Yapeim) can take any action, such as criminal defamation, against anyone making unfounded allegations against it, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak said.

Najib said this when replying to a reporter's question at a press conference in Antalya, Turkey, on the allegation that funds from Yapeim, which should be utilised for charity work, had been misused to pay for trips by the Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Jamil Khir Baharom and his delegation to travel abroad.

On the action by Jamil Khir to lodge a police report on the allegation, Najib said: "If he is innocent, he can take any action whether (to sue for) criminal defamation or civil defamation."

Asked whether the matter was an effort to taint the government's image, he said such things always occurred.

Jamil Khir (photo) had earlier made a police report at the district police headquarters in Putrajaya on the allegation that he had misused public donations to pay for his trips abroad.

He said the allegation, made by NOW (National Oversight and Whistleblowers) director Akmal Nasir, that the programme in the United States was for enjoyment using funds meant for the orphanage, was a mischeivous slander and an attempt to bring down his credibility and integrity as a minister.

The minister explained that his visit to the United States from May 21 to 29, 2014, was to fulfil the invitation to attend a programme, organised by an agency under his supervision, especially Yapeim, in collaboration with the Malaysian Embassy in the US, including the Education Malaysia (EM) programme in Chicago in conjunction with the Mid West Game, which gathered more than 1,000 students from the US and Canada.

- Bernama