



**Rid gambling at federal level first, Umno told  
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The Penang government has hit out hard at Umno's allegations that the money used to fund programmes for the poor and senior citizens was derived from gambling outlets.

State exco for Islam and religious affairs, Abdul Malik Abu Kassim said he was not surprised at Umno's tactics of trying to smear yet again the Penang government's reputation.

After failing to rile up people with racial and religious sentiments, Umno is trying its luck to denigrate the RM100 senior citizens appreciation award, he added.

"Umno tries to show it is religious by rejecting gambling but the truth is all gambling premises in the country have been approved by the BN, through the Ministry of Finance," said Abdul Malik, at a press conference in Komtar today.

"It all started with the approval given to Malaysia's most popular gambling den in Genting Highlands in 1969," added the Batu Maung (PKR) assemblyperson.

Abdul Malik (*right*) said if Umno was really sincere in wanting to wipe out gambling, it should start by 'cleaning the mess' at the federal level, including prohibiting Malays from becoming Board members of such companies.

He was referring to a recent expose by Umno information Youth chief Reezal Merican in Kepala Batas involving a letter issued to the Penang Turf Club director regarding a balance of contribution of RM500,000.

Funds came from crippling graft

According to him, the letter dated July 9 signed by Lim's private secretary Farida Hani M Yacob confirmed that the contribution had been collected by the state.

Yesterday, Penang Opposition leader Azhar Ibrahim held a ceremony in Penaga, to collect the RM100 cash award from 40 Muslim senior citizens who wanted to return the money as it was considered "haram".

Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng has denied the allegations outright, saying that the money used to fund the appreciation programme was the direct result of weeding out corruption.

Meanwhile, Abdul Malik insisted that contributions obtained from gambling sources were not used to help the Muslim community.

He said that before Pakatan Rakyat took over the local administration in 2008, the state's deficit stood at RM35.6 million, and RM39.4 million in 2009.

However, due to Penang's CAT (competent, accountable and transparent) governance, the state had been able to record revenue of RM88 million in 2008 and RM77 million in 2009, he added.

He emphasised that the state would have recorded a revenue of RM92 million if it had not needed to pay for a land scandal which took place during BN's ruling.

"The money used for Muslims - whether it is for the hard core poor or senior citizens - comes from the state's anti-corruption savings," said Abdul Malik.

"Please do not be fooled by Umno's propaganda; they are suddenly acting like heroes and defenders of the rakyat," he said sarcastically.

"The truth is, during BN's rule in Penang, the poor and senior citizens had been neglected all this while, " he added.

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