

**Students in limbo after college 'loses' passports**  
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About 60 international students enrolled with business college Nirwana Academy are left in the lurch after the college had lost their passports and other relevant documents, claimed several students.

These documents were tendered to the college for registration purposes more than a year ago.

The students are now claiming that the college had failed to take good care of their documents and had made it worse by not taking necessary steps to replace the missing documents.

One affected student, Algerian student Mohamed Ben Salah, who signed up for a business administration course at the Kuala Lumpur-based college, has lodged a police report two months ago on the matter.

"The Algerian embassy has informed the Ministry of Higher Education but so far they have yet to get a response from the college," Mohamed told *Malaysiakini*.

Another student, Bangladeshi Mohibul Islam, claimed that all foreign students in the college faced the same problem.

"I paid RM14,000 for tuition fees last year and I have yet to get back my passport. When approached, the college told me to pay RM5,000 for a replacement passport," he said.

The students claimed that the college had informed them that their documents were stolen from its office and had assured the students that all documents will be replaced for free.

When contacted, Nirwana managing director Maran AK however did not openly admit that the passports and other documents were stolen from the college.

He claimed that the college could have surrendered the passports to the police for criminal reasons. He did not elaborate on this.

**College ready to compensate**

He however said the college will compensate the students with replacement documents "if it was a mistake on the college's part".

"Come and see us within one week to collect the (compensation) cheque," he said.

He also challenged the students to lodge a police report if they had any evidence of wrongdoing on the part of the college in losing the documents.

"It is also up to the respective embassies to file a complaint against us. By right, their embassies should have contacted us by now," he added.

It is a normal procedure for colleges to submit the passports of its international students to

the immigration department for visa purposes. Some colleges also withhold the passports to ensure full college fees are settled by the students.

A private college administrator told *Malaysiakini* that colleges have no right to hold foreign students' passports.

"Private colleges should be responsible for the welfare of foreign students and should look after them throughout their stay here," she said.

Algeria Embassy head of business section Bousri Khaled, when contacted, confirmed that the matter is under his purview and wants the relevant authorities to resolve the matter.

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