

Umno Youth: Gov't should tighten its belt after fuel hike

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The government should cut its expenditure following the fuel price hike yesterday to show that it is serious in reducing its fiscal deficit, said Umno Youth.

"Aside from asking the rakyat to bear with the reduced subsidy, the government must prove through savings and measures to prevent leakages in government expenditure," said its chief Khairy Jamaluddin Abu Bakar (*right*).

He was speaking at a press conference at the Umno headquarters today following the youth wing's executive committee meeting today.

He said the government should look into providing targeted aid for lower and middle income groups such as the BR1M cash handouts and tax deductions, while reviewing subsidies given to large corporations. In addition, he urged the domestic trade ministry to take stern action against those who raised their prices unreasonably high following the price hike.

Rafizi told to debate in parliament

When asked whether cabinet members should pay for their own petrol as suggested by Pandan MP Rafizi Ramli, Khairy who is also the youth and sports minister said the government is looking into more comprehensive measures instead.

"For example for myself, I have told the (my ministry's) secretary-general to keep an eye on the operating expenditure and be more prudent with it," he said. He also brushed aside Rafizi's (*right*) challenge for a public debate on the topic, saying that the parliament is a more appropriate platform for this.

"That is the best place to debate it. I used to debate with him on the National Higher Education Fund (PTPTN) and other issues outside the parliament because he was not yet a member of parliament.

"But now he is an MP, so he should know that the Dewan Rakyat is the main stage for political debate in our country," he said. He added that there are time constraints to debating outside the parliament, and the latter venue would also allow for issues to be discussed deeply.

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