

PKR accuses Jamil Khir of hiding behind officers in zakat abuse case
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By Debra Chong

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 30 — As minister for Islamic affairs, Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharom must stop hiding behind government officials and explain the RM63,650 in zakat money allegedly misused for legal fees, PKR charged today.

“In this matter, Jamil is the one who must put an end to the doubts. I stressed last night that he should not hide behind government officers,” the opposition party’s communications director Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad said.

He continued to dispute the Federal Territory Islamic Religious Council’s (MAIWP) statement yesterday that the sum from the alms fund had been used to cover legal expenses over trivial syariah lawsuits against the government by PKR adviser Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The allegation of zakat fund abuse was first raised by former police criminal investigation chief Datuk Mat Zain earlier this week.

The ex-policeman had accused Jamil Khir and two senior MAIWP officials of using zakat funds to settle personal legal fees last year as recorded in the Auditor-General’s Report for 2010.

According to the report, Jamil Khir, MAIWP director Datuk Che Mat Che Ali and MAIWP chief prosecutor Shamsudin Hussain had withdrawn RM63,650 from the council’s zakat fund to settle their legal costs incurred when Anwar named the trio as respondents in his qazaf application.

The audit report also confirmed that the sum was repaid to the fund after the council obtained a RM70,000 grant in June last year as part of its general resources allocation from the government.

“Perhaps there are some who consider RM63,650 as a small amount compared to the PKFZ (RM12 billion) and NFC (RM250 million) scandals. But this issue involves alms money, which is one of the main pillars of Islam,” Nik Nazmi said in a media statement.

He added that PKR will file a police report next week if Jamil Khir does not provide a reasonable explanation over the disputed use of the zakat money.

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