

Zakat abuse claim: NGO wants King to sack defiant Jamil Khir
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SHAH ALAM, Dec 30 — PKR's anti-graft NGO Jingga 13 said today it will call on the Yang di-Pertuan Agong to sack Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharom from government if the minister in charge of Islamic affairs does not apologise over the alleged abuse of zakat funds.

Jingga 13 secretary Saifuddin Shafi Muhammad told reporters that the King, as head of religion in Malaysia, has the power to remove the minister in the Prime Minister's Department for using RM63,650 in zakat for legal fees.

Saifuddin Shafi (centre) speaks to the press after making the report. — Picture by Shannon Teoh

"If he does not apologise within 48 hours, we will send a memo asking the Agong to take action as head of religion to defend Islam," he said before members of Jingga 13 filed a report against the senator at the Selangor Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) headquarters here today.

The allegation of zakat fund abuse was first raised by former senior policeman Datuk Mat Zain Ibrahim earlier this week.

The former Kuala Lumpur criminal investigation chief accused Jamil Khir and two senior Federal Territory Islamic Religious Council (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to the report, Jamil Khir, MAIWP director Datuk Che Mat Che Ali and MAIWP chief prosecutor Shamsudin Hussain had withdrawn RM63,650 from the council's zakat fund to settle their legal costs incurred when Anwar named the trio as respondents in his qazaf application.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.

PKR has stepped up pressure on Jamil Khir, repeatedly calling on him to personally explain the alleged abuse and why the sum was only repaid in December, six months after MAIWP obtained the grant.

MAIWP said yesterday the sum from the alms fund had been used to cover legal expenses over trivial syarie lawsuits against the government by PKR de facto leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

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