

PKR claims double standards in handling of Jamil Khir's 'zakat abuse'
The Malaysian Insider
December 29, 2011
By Shazwan Mustafa Kamal

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 29 — PKR has accused Federal Territory Islamic Religious Council (MAIWP) officials of practising double standards in defending Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharom's alleged zakat money abuse, claiming that other people had been imprisoned and punished for a lesser offence.

The Pakatan Rakyat party had yesterday urged Jamil Khir (picture) to break his silence over alleged abuse of RM32,150 in zakat money, piling the pressure on the minister in the Prime Minister's Department after a former top policeman called on the senator to be investigated.

Retired city criminal investigation chief Datuk Mat Zain Ibrahim had said police should probe Jamil Khir and two senior MAIWP officials with the same vigour they showed in pursuing tithe collector Reduan Mohd Said for the same offence recently.

"Why are there double standards in (this) case (compared to) a zakat case in Johor involving Reduan Mohd Said, who misappropriated RM19,510 and returned it. He was jailed for four years and whipped three times," said PKR communications director Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad in a statement today.

Nik Nazmi pointed out that instead of explaining the allegations of zakat abuse involving Jamil Khir and two other MAIWP officials, MAIWP executive director Muhamad Yamin Ismail had attacked Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, claiming he had "abused" the court process resulting in federal funds being used to settle the matter.

According to the Auditor-General's Report for 2010, Jamil Khir, MAIWP director Datuk Che Mat Che Ali and MAIWP chief prosecutor Shamsudin Hussain had withdrawn RM63,650 from the council's zakat fund to settle their legal costs.

The costs were incurred when Opposition Leader 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.

"Jamil Khir as a responsible minister in Islamic affairs should step forward and not hide behind the government officer to answer this issue," said Nik Nazmi.

Former top cop Mat Zain had insisted the trio had misappropriated property under section 403 of the Penal Code and should be punished accordingly.

He also cited section 409B of the Penal Code, which states that if any offence prescribed in sections 403 and 404 is proven, "it shall be presumed that he had acted dishonestly until the contrary is proved".

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