

## **PKR shows proof of zakat abuse by Jamil Khir, two others**

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**By Clara Chooi**

PETALING JAYA, Jan 11 — Dismissing Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharom's denial that he had abused zakat funds, PKR says it will lodge a report against the minister tomorrow with documents to disprove his defence.

PKR communications director Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad distributed to the media today the documents showing that Jamil Khir, along with two senior officials from the Federal Territories Islamic Religious Council (MAIWP), had used RM63,650 in alms money to settle legal costs incurred when Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim named them as respondents in his 2010 qazaf application in the Syariah Court.

The first document is a payment voucher from MAIWP for RM32,150 dated April 29, 2010, to a law firm as "payment of legal fees for the case of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim vs Shahsuddin Hussain, Datuk Che Mat Che Ali and Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharom".

It is clearly stated on the voucher that the funds had been channelled from MAIWP's zakat fund.

Jamil Khir is minister in the Prime Minister's Department in charge of religious affairs while Che Mat is the MAIWP director and Shahsuddin, MAIWP's chief prosecutor.

According to Nik Nazmi, the payment voucher was revealed to PKR by a MAIWP official last year and the matter was then raised in Parliament in June by Machang MP Saifuddin Nasution.

"We then brought the case to the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) for further action. The PAC then requested an investigation by the Auditor-General," Nik Nazmi said.

The Seri Setia assemblyman also distributed copies of a letter by Auditor-General Tan Sri Ambrin Buang to PAC chairman Datuk Seri Azmi Khalid dated November 21, 2011, confirming that RM63,650 of zakat funds were used to settle the trio's legal fees.

In Ambrin's investigation report attached to the letter, the A-G confirmed that Che Mat had first approved an interim payment of RM31,500 from MAIWP's "general resource allocation for legal services" on January 28, 2010.

"This payment was approved on February 9, 2010, through voucher No. 2010B01304, to use zakat allocation first as the government grant was yet to be received," Ambrin wrote in his report.

Ambrin also validated MAIWP's second payment voucher for RM32,150 on April 29, 2010, explaining that it was to settle the remaining legal fees incurred in the qazaf case.

He said MAIWP had received its government grant of RM700,000 in June 22 that year, and in December, the council used money from the grant to repay the RM63,650 it had withdrawn from the zakat funds.

"In his denial, Jamil Khir never touched on the A-G's report confirming that two payments — one in February 2010 and another in April — were made using zakat funds.

"According to the A-G, the money was replaced only in December, six months after it was used," said Nik Nazmi.

He said although the funds were repaid later, the trio's act of advancing money from the zakat fund to settle their personal legal fees violated the Penal Code.

"PKR views seriously the abuse of such an important Islamic institution. I will lodge a report at 11am tomorrow at the Dang Wangi police station and produce these documents," he said.

When denying the allegations last year, Jamil Khir had insisted that he had paid his qazaf legal fees through a RM700,000 special fund allocated by Putrajaya and not using zakat funds.

In his statement carried on Bernama Online on December 31, the minister had made no reference to allegations that the alms money was first used to settle the fees.

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