

PKR seeks police probe on Jamil Khir zakat abuse
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KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 12 — PKR today lodged a police report against Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharam and two MAIWP officials for possible zakat abuse, despite the Islamic council's earlier justifying the use of alms to pay for the trio's legal defence.

"If it is 'halal' to use zakat funds in this instance, why didn't Datuk Seri Jamil Khir say so from the start? If it is legal, he doesn't have to be ashamed," PKR communications director Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad told reporters after lodging the police report here at the Dang Wangi police headquarters.

He said the trio should be investigated under Section 405 (criminal breach of trust), 409 (CBT involving a public official), and 415 (cheating) of the Penal Code.

Yesterday, Nik Nazmi distributed to the media 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 Shabsuddin 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 Shabsuddin, MAIWP's chief prosecutor.

Earlier today, Che Mat said zakat funds may be used by the Islamic affairs minister, himself and another MAIWP official to pay their legal fees as it was to "defend the sovereignty and honour of an Islamic institution."

Che Mat, who is director of the Federal Territory Islamic Affairs Department (JAWI) denied abusing RM63,650 in zakat funds along with Jamil Khir, saying the council commingled both alms money and funds from the government in the same account.

The Attorney-General's Report for 2010 had previously confirmed the funds were paid out from zakat money before being repaid in December last year using part a federal funds infusion.

Today, Nik Nazmi said the subsequent repayment of the funds did not exempt the matter from being a case of misappropriation.

Former Kuala Lumpur CID chief Datuk Mat Zain Ibrahim previously demanded that Jamil and the two MAIWP men be probed for misappropriation, pointing out the case of a zakat

collector who was sentenced to jail and whipping in Johor for a similar offence.

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