

Prove PMO did not pay for engagement dinner, Rafizi tells Najib
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By Shannon Teoh

KUALA LUMPUR, March 10 — PKR today demanded that Datuk Seri Najib Razak provide evidence that public funds were not used to pay the RM409,767 bill for his daughter's engagement dinner.

Party strategic director Rafizi Ramli (picture) said in a statement that the demand for an apology by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) "is premature at this junction as the two-paragraph statement consists of only a mere denial, without any hard evidence or facts that can support the denial."

"Nor did the PMO dispute the veracity of the banquet event order (BEO) document... from Shangri-La Hotel that suggests otherwise as the whole booking and payment instructions were dealt with by the PMO," he said.

The PMO denied last night footing the bill for the event held at the Seri Perdana official residence of the PM last year.

"The engagement bill of PM's daughter, Nooryana Najwa, was not taken up by the Prime Minister's Office as alleged by some quarters. PKR's strategic director Rafizi Ramli should apologise for his allegations, which are false, defamatory and a deliberate smear on the Prime Minister's reputation.

"No public funds were used to meet the costs of his daughter's engagement reception, which was paid for personally by the Prime Minister and his family," it said in a statement.

Rafizi showed reporters yesterday the BEO as proof of his claim that the prime minister spent RM409,767 on the June 17, 2011 event to celebrate his daughter's engagement to Daniyar Nazarbayev from Kazakhstan.

This comprised a bill of RM18,792 for 36 VIPs — who were served Wagyu beef and marinated scallops — RM309,975 for 862 guests and RM81,000 for handling costs.

Copies of the purported BEO he distributed showed that the dinner was charged to the PMO.

Rafizi said today that Najib must confirm or deny the veracity of the BEO he produced with hard evidence to disprove the allegation.

He said the prime minister must instruct his office to produce the original copy of the purchase order and invoice sent to and from Shangri-La Hotel to ascertain which party was originally responsible for making the order and a snapshot of the government's accounts to ascertain whether the transaction was ever recorded.

"He has to produce proof of payment in the form of a copy of his personal cheque used to pay, or his bank statements or any third-party records of his financial transactions that can substantiate his claim that he did pay for the bill," Rafizi said.

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