

In latest expose, NOW alleges Yapeim spent RM100,000 on New York trip

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Yayasan Pembangunan Ekonomi Malaysia (Yapeim) spent more than RM100,000 on a trip to New York last year, National Oversight and Whistleblowers (NOW) said, in its latest series of exposés on the government's Islamic charity.

NOW director Akmal Nasir said the programme was carried out from September 17 to September 27, 2014, and involved 100 participants.

"Detailed information reveals the breakdown of the programme's expenditure for each agency. RM66,960 for Yayasan Pembangunan Anak/Yatim Miskin (Pemangkin) and RM101,720 for Yapeim," Akmal told a press conference in Kuala Lumpur today.

He said the programme, organised by the Kelab Santun Amerika 2014, was held in conjunction with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's visit to the US.

"What does Yapeim have to do with the prime minister's visit to New York? Yapeim is a charity foundation, and not a government department.

"How many overseas trips has Yapeim been involved in from 2013 to 2015?" said Akmal.

He also urged Putrajaya to come clean on the other exposés NOW had made on Yapeim.

Akmal today shared with the media a copy of a formal request for funds, approved by Yapeim deputy chairman Datuk Zaleha Hussin, that showed the foundation received RM101,720 for the programme.

Akmal also urged Putrajaya to reshuffle Yapeim's management and administration, and to ensure that the board of trustees could not hold other positions in the foundation.

"Yapeim's subsidiaries and institutions must be reshuffled so that there are no duplication of functions, to reduce management costs."

On Friday, Akmal said Yapeim had used funds to organise a religious programme in Australia, flying on business class to Sydney.

He said the agency along with its business outfit Ar-Rahnu, its research arm and Yapeim spent a total of RM218,505 on the nine-day programme in April 2014.

NOW had also revealed that the charity body spent RM290,000 to fund a marriage course in Paris, France.

Akmal also alleged that Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharom's trip to the US last year was funded by Yapeim.

Police have started their investigations on NOW for "unlawfully obtaining" documents related to Yapeim while the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission is investigating the charity body. – November 23, 2015.

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