

## **PKR MP tells Azmin: If you were in my shoes, you'd understand**

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**By Nawar Firdaws**

**Kelana Jaya MP Wong Chen says 400 single mothers and abandoned old people are affected by state government's decision to freeze his welfare account after a 'non-transparent' audit.**

SUBANG JAYA: Disgruntled Kelana Jaya MP Wong Chen has told Mohd Azmin Ali, who said he had also undergone an audit without fuss, that the Selangor menteri besar would understand how Wong felt if he were "in my shoes".

In an attempt to help Azmin understand how it was like to be in his shoes, Wong painted a scenario in which Azmin's office was the one audited without due process.

In that hypothetical situation, Azmin "will be blissfully unaware he is being audited.

"The auditors will not visit his office, will not contact his officers for an explanation, and will not view any original documents," Wong said at a media conference here today.

"The audit report will take 11 long months to be written. Meanwhile, the treasury will immediately freeze Azmin's Mesra Rakyat community spending, but they will not notify him of the freeze.

"After the audit report comes out 11 months later, assuming he has the same results as mine, Azmin will then be informed of the very bad news that the state government has decided to expand the freeze to his entire community spending, without any basis whatsoever.

"The audit report will state that no serious issues were found in the management of his constituency."

Wong said that in the above scenario, he did not think Azmin would make the same remarks he did yesterday.

Azmin yesterday told the media that Wong, as an MP, should understand the audit process and respect it as it was to ensure transparency and accountability.

The menteri besar, who is also Gombak MP, said he had undergone the audit process too, and did not view it as "an issue".

He advised Wong to discuss the matter with the state government instead of going public with his complaint.

Wong said while he was unsure of the audit process Azmin underwent, he knew, based on media reports, that Azmin was at least informed he was being audited.

“My audit process and his audit process are clearly different, as mine was done without any transparency or notice,” he said.

Wong also addressed Azmin’s statement that he should have discussed his concerns with the state government instead of publicising them.

Wong said he had written several letters to the state government but they went unanswered for three months. He claimed to have also met Azmin personally in May this year, and was promised a reply.

“I don’t understand how I can have a discussion with the Selangor government that has consistently stonewalled me. This matter is now five months pending,” he said.

He said while he was not the type to air dirty linen in public, the state government’s decision to freeze his Mesra Rakyat account for more than a year now had hurt his constituents.

This, he added, was an unusual practice, especially as the account was frozen even before the audit was completed.

“It is important to note that the Selangor government didn’t even bother to write to inform me that my Mesra Rakyat spending was frozen.

“My officers and I were unaware of it until June 9 this year, almost a year later.”

Wong said around 400 struggling families were affected by this action. They had been recipients of annual welfare aid his office provided, he said.

“They comprised single mothers and abandoned old people from the Desa Mentari area.

“When they freeze my accounts without any explanation, it hurts the poor people in my constituency who have come to expect this welfare assistance.”

Wong’s community spending was frozen after an audit found that his office was not spending enough of the RM250,000 Mesra Rakyat funds he was provided every year.

Explaining this, Wong said the funds were meant for small projects and social functions. While he claimed to have fulfilled the small projects requirement, he had avoided holding social events.

This was because he had allocated the money for the thousands of poor people in Kelana Jaya.

“I didn’t want to waste the money on social events. And we were given the leeway to decide how we want to use the money, so long as they fall within the four, five categories outlined,” he said.

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