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Judul : Legislative expenses. House tells member to complete visit reports
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LEGISLATIVE EXPENSES

House tells member to complete visit reports

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In apparent response to the public outcry surrounding the use of working visit expenses, the House of Representatives (DPR) recently instructed members of the legislative body to complete and submit working visit expense reports immediately after travel.

"It's better for legislators to finish and submit their reports immediately," House deputy speaker Fadli Zon told reporters after opening the fifth sitting of the DPR on Tuesday.

Speculation about lawmakers misusing the working visits budget arose after a letter addressed to all party faction members, signed by the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) faction secretary Bambang Wuryanto, circulated last Thursday.

The letter allegedly requested that lawmakers immediately complete reports of their working visits and visits made outside the recess period from the third and fourth sitting sessions of 2014-2015 and the first and second sessions of 2015-2016, the period when newly-elected, controversial Golkar Party chairman Setya Novanto was still in charge as House deputy speaker.

The letter is said to have been a follow up to a letter from the House's secretariat general who, in turn, had allegedly received a letter from the Supreme Audit Agency (BPK) indicating that billions of rupiah in state losses had potentially arisen from unreported or fictitiously reported long-distance working visits undertaken by lawmakers worth Rp 945 billion (US$71 million).

Fadli said he had met with the House secretary general to seek clarification and had discovered that the secretariat had not circulated such a letter to any faction. He claimed that there was no such fictitious report during the sessions.

"It's just a very technical administrative matter, thus the secretariat should work fast regarding the reports," said the Gerindra Party politician. "Moreover, the BPK audit on the report has yet to be completed. We should wait for the result first," Fadli added.

The BPK's ongoing audit of DPR lawmakers working visit budget uses is slated should be completed in June.

Another House deputy speaker Agus Hermanto of the Democratic Party speculated that there might be misunderstanding between the BPK and the lawmakers. He pointed out that lawmakers were actually not obliged to report their working visit activities in detail.

Agus explained that the budget was provided to the lawmakers in lump sum payments, a single large payment which does not require a specific report to be submitted with regard to how it is used.