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Rafidah: Focus on winning election

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Wanita Umno members should put aside their differences and concentrate on winning the general election, its former chief Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz said today.

She reminded members to concentrate on their constituencies, which means they must go down to the grass roots.

"I hope that Wanita Umno will not have any bickering that will hamper our work for the election. This is the attitude that has brought about the mess we are now in," she added.

Rafidah, who is International Trade and Industry Minister, was speaking to reporters after officiating the Malaysian Industrial Development Authority familiarisation programme for officials of investment promotion agencies.

She added that in Wanita Umno there were no "Rafidah's supporters".

"I regard every Wanita Umno member as my member because they are Umno members. Whether they vote for me, like me, support me or not that is immaterial to me."

She also asked Wanita Umno members to stop aligning themselves to factions.

"That is the way to the downfall of Umno."

She advised the movement's chief Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman not to play "factional" politics.

Rafidah was Wanita Umno chief for 12 years before Siti Zaharah took over in 1996.

Meanwhile, Wanita Umno Exco member Dr Norraesah Mohamad today expressed surprise over newspaper reports that the movement's Exco members might call for a vote of no-confidence against Siti Zaharah.

"As far as we are concerned, the issue has been resolved after the reshuffle was withdrawn by Siti Zaharah on the advice of the party president (Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad)," Norraesah said.

Wanita deputy chief Datuk Napsiah Omar confirmed that there had been no discussion among the Exco members on any proposed vote of no-confidence against Siti Zaharah.

"I am also not aware of such a move," said Exco member Datuk Maznah Hamid, who was rapped for her controversial statement on the existence of factions and back-stabbing within the movement.

Maznah said she made the statement about the existence of factions to open the eyes of everyone so that all would work to improve the situation.

In Kuala Pilah, Napsiah said Siti Zaharah should call for a meeting of the executive council.

She said this was to explain her (Siti Zaharah's) controversial decision to initiate a reshuffle within the movement.

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