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Rafidah announces new line-up of Wanita Umno State chiefs

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - Newly-elected Wanita Umno head Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz today announced the line-up of the movement's new State chiefs, which saw nine incumbents being dropped.

Excluded from the new line-up is Rafidah's predecessor, Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman of Pahang. She is replaced by Maznah Mazlan.

In one of the closest contests in the just concluded general assembly, Rafidah beat Siti Zaharah by 12 votes on Wednesday, reversing her defeat to Zaharah by 27 votes in the party's 1996 election.

Only three State Wanita Umno chiefs were retained: Datuk Napsiah Omar (Negri Sembilan), Mastika Junaidah Hussein (Perlis) and Saripah Aminah Syed Mohamed (Penang).

She said they had not decided on Perak chief. The post is held by Ainon Khairiyah Abbas.

New Wanita deputy head Datuk Shahrizat Abdul Jalil was promoted to head Federal Territory Wanita Umno.

Apart from Siti Zaharah, who is National Unity and Social Development Minister, others dropped are Wanita Umno State chiefs from Kedah (Fatimah Ismail), Selangor (Datin Paduka Rakibah Manaf), Federal Territory (Azizah Samad), Malacca (Mahani Manaf), Johor (Datuk Sabariah Ahmad), Terengganu (Zaleha Long), Kelantan (Zaleha Hussin) and Sabah (Datuk Norjan Khan Bahadar).

The new line-up for the State Wanita Umno chiefs and deputies are: Datuk Dayang Mahani Pengiran Ahmad Raffae and Armani Aminuddin (Sabah), Datin Nik Azizah Nik Yahya and Rohani Daud (Kelantan), Senator Toh Puan Wan Asiah Wan Ahmad and Wan Ramlah Wan Ahmad (Terengganu), Maznah and Rosni Zahari (Pahang), Halimah Mohd Sadique and Sharifah Azizah Syed Zain (Johor), Senator Datuk Hazizah Mohd Sultan and Ramlah Abas (Malacca), Napsiah and Shamsiah Samsudin (Negri Sembilan).

Others include Shahrizat and Senator Faridah Abu Hassan (Federal Territory), Datin Paduka Seripah Noli Syed Hussein and Norhayati Datuk Onn (Selangor), Saripah Aminah and Senator Che Jam Harun (Penang), Rosnah Majid and Barishah Ahmad (Kedah), and Mastika Junaidah and Sophiah Ahmad (Perlis).

Rafidah, who is International Trade and Industry Minister, announced the new line-up at a hotel here after chairing the movement's first exco meeting.

She also announced the appointment of chairpersons to the movement's 19 bureaus, adding that two new bureaus had been created - Rural Affairs as well as Sabah Affairs.

On the defeat of all five women candidates for the 25-member supreme council on Thursday, Rafidah said she had written a letter to party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad seeking a request for the appointment of at least two women candidates to the council.

On whether the exclusion of Siti Zaharah would affect her plans to close ranks within the movement, Rafidah said it was not a problem as Siti Zaharah was in the Cabinet, a position higher than those in Wanita Umno.

On whether Siti Zaharah's absence might upset her supporters, Rafidah said: "We don't talk about members being Siti Zaharah or Rafidah supporters, we are supporters of Umno."

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