

Kit Siang predicts Shahrizat will not return
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Now that Umno Wanita chief Shahrizat Abdul Jalil has gone on a three weeks sabbatical, veteran opposition lawmaker Lim Kit Siang said Malaysians should not expect her to come back.

In a statement today, Lim said that although Shahrizat was supposed to have done so voluntarily in view of police investigations on the National Feedlot Corporation (NFC) fiasco, he believes that she was pressured to do so.

"Nobody expects Shahrizat to return to the cabinet or Parliament after the expiry of her three-week leave expiring on Feb 3, 2012," he said.

Lim said this in view of Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's claim that he had held discussions with Shahrizat on the matter.

"I've discussed with her the decision to take leave. It is an appropriate decision as it allows the authority to carry out a thorough investigation," Najib was quoted as saying yesterday.

This, said Lim, meant that Shahrizat had managed to resist investigations into her alleged role in the scandal, which broke out following the publication of the Auditor-General's Report 2010 last year.

Meanwhile, Lim also urged the government for the establishment of an independent public inquiry into the NFC scandal which must also encompass the roles played by Muhyiddin Yassin and Noh Omar as former and current agriculture minister.

Lim said that the freezing of NFC's assets pending investigations by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) and the police was inadequate without a full inquiry.

Commenting on Najib's announcement yesterday, Lim said it was unacceptable for the premier to ask Muhyiddin and Noh to resolve the NFC mess.

"This is totally unacceptable as Muhyiddin and Nor Omar are among the ministers, one being Agriculture Minister at the time of the approval of the RM300 million NFC project and the latter as the current minister in charge of the project, who owe the Malaysian public a fully accounting of why they had allowed the NFC scandal to reach such a disgraceful proportion under their charge," said Lim.

Lim also asked if Najib was prepared to establish a royal commission of inquiry and declassifying relevant cabinet documents for a public inquiry.