Shahrizat as Wanita Umno chief 'a step backward'
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By Hazlan Zakaria

Wanita Umno's decision to retain Women, Family and Community Development Minister Shahrizat Abdul Jalil as its chief is nothing short of a backward step for women in Malaysia, says its PKR counterpart.

NONE“It is a backward move that neither advances nor uplifts the status of women in Malaysia,” said Ampang MP and Wanita PKR chief Zuraida Kamaruddin (left).

She said the leadership crisis was now a cancer in the Umno women’s wing.

The involvement of Shahrizat’s family in the National Feedlot Corporation (NFC) scandal is like a knife being twisted at the sides of the organisation.

"Shahrizat refuses to step down, despite being advised by her own deputy Kamilia Ibrahim not to drag the party into the matter.

“Her family’s scandal is causing difficulties for Wanita Umno and making it hard to explain to the grassroots,” said Zuraida.

The unease, Zuraida alleged, had cost the movement dearly, necessitating the recent special gathering to allow Umno president Najib Abdul Razak to calm down the restless members.

The Ampang MP also hit out at Najib, saying that despite calling for national transformation, he failed to do this in his own party, bowing to the same practice of protecting their own.

“His action is seperti ayam jantan yang berkokok berderai-derai, tapi ekor bergelumang tahi (like a rooster crowing loudly all over the town, yet its own feathers are covered in dung),” Zuraida hit out.

She said this was indicative of Najib’s true character as a coward who goes against his own transformation agenda.

NONEZuraida is one of the Pakatan leaders who has been very vocal in criticising Shahrizat over the NFC scandal. She and PKR strategy director Rafizi Ramli (right) have been sued by the minister for their allegations.

Rafizi and Zuraida have counter-sued Shahrizat, adding fuel to the legal fracas.

Shahrizat has faced calls from within and outside Umno to quit both her party and cabinet posts after her husband and children were implicated in the mismanagement of public funds.

This is through a RM250 million government soft loan given to NFC to implement a national feedlot project to uplift the local cattle industry.

Shahrizat’s husband has been charged with two counts of criminal breach of trust and two counts of contravening the Companies Act.

Shahrizat had announced that she would not accept any offer to extend her senatorship and federal ministerial post and would serve out her term, which expires at the end of next month.

However, she will retain the Wanita Umno chief's post. Some have questioned her remorse and sincerity by saying that it would be proper for her to let go of all her cabinet and party posts.

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