

Rafidah: Wanita must drop 'touch-and-go' style
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By Salhan K Ahmad

Former Wanita Umno chief Rafidah Aziz is concerned that the wing's "touch-and-go" campaigns for the coming general election are not effective enough.

"I am no longer chief but I am still concerned about Wanita Umno," she said, adding that its members should be explaining issues affecting Umno to the grassroots, rather than joining demonstrations and assemblies.

"Please work at the branch level because the next general election is important.

"Don't just do 'touch-and-go' work, do it properly," she said at a meeting with social media activists in Kuala Lumpur last night.

NONERafidah (right in photo) urged the wing's members to go house-to-house campaigning, as was done previously.

"Check the voters. Check on their characters, check on their attitudes, meet them at their homes, as we had done successfully for decades.

"Don't just randomly say 'oh, everything looks okay'.... No," she said.

Asked to speculate on the outcome of the next election, which must be called by May next year, Rafidah said BN would perform better than it did in 2008.

"But the party machinery must work," the Kuala Kangsar MP stressed.

Throw away the bugs, keep the net

Comparing BN to a mosquito net, Rafidah, who is also the former minister of International Trade and Industries, urged BN supporters not to abandon the party because of dissatisfaction over a leader or an issue.

"Because this BN mosquito net does have holes here and there but don't throw it away. If there are holes, help fix it.

"If there are pijat (bugs) that want to disturb us, it is our job to throw away the bugs but keep the mosquito net."

NONEThe word pijat also had the audience laughing when she was asked about her criticisms against her successor Shahrizat Abdul Jalil (left), who is also known by the moniker Kak Ijat.

The Women, Family and Community Development Minister's family members have been accused of abusing a RM250 million government soft loan given to the National Feedlot Corporation (NFC).

Rafidah added her calls for Shahrizat's resignation from the cabinet were for the party's benefit and not to stage a comeback.

In addition, the party machinery has to explain the NFC issue to the electorate.

"At first I told Shahrizat, if she is a burden to the party she should make a decision such that we can be

free of its effects.

Still planning a comeback

"Maybe she thinks we are not affected, that is up to the people who know her and are informed. But if you ask me, I beg to differ," she said.

Rafidah added that she was shocked upon receiving SMS messages criticising and accusing her of still planning a comeback despite her age.

Rafidah explained that she made the statement based on grassroots' sentiments on the issue.

"It is not as if when I sit at home I don't hear people talking. When asked by reporters, I will answer. If I don't want to answer, I say 'no comment'.

"When I said that, it is because we had to explain (the issue). It is not just me, even Gerakan members are sighing 'this is very hard to explain'," she said.

NONE Besides Rafidah, Shahrizat's deputy Kamilia Ibrahim (centre in photo) had also urged her to resign as Wanita Umno chief to preserve the credibility of BN, Umno and the women's wing.

Rafidah was also asked on Shahrizat's move to challenge her for the party post at the party elections in March 2009, although Rafidah had promised to handover the position to her.

"We had a promise that there would be a handover in June (2009), but she insisted on fighting. So I said 'let's fight', God chooses the victor and the loser.

"Losing is not a problem to me, I can't take my position to my grave," she said.

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