

Najib best man for women's ministry, says Shahrizat

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By Nigel Aw

Outgoing Women, Family and Community Development Minister Shahrizat Abdul Jalil today shot down claims that Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's decision to fill her position as acting minister was a regressive move for women's representation in government.

Her portfolio, Shahrizat explained, was not exclusively for women as it dealt with social development in general.

Shahrizat at FT mosque event "You must remember that the ministry is for social development. We deal with women, families, disabled people, welfare and social issues and the elderly, so it is all-encompassing," she said when approached at the Federal Territories Mosque in Kuala Lumpur this afternoon.

Shahrizat (in white tudung), who will cease to be a cabinet minister tomorrow after her senatorship expires, stressed that a man serving as an acting minister for her portfolio will not affect women's representation in the government.

"You must remember that under the BN government, women's achievements have been something to be proud of," she said.

'Women's participation is strong'

Shahrizat added that at present, women's representation in the public sector has not only increased at the grassroots but also at the topmost levels.

She said her ministry is in "the best of hands" under Najib and this was the "best gift" for her ministry's workers.

Asked if there were no other credible women leader to helm the ministry, she replied: "I think the prime minister would have thought long and deep about it and he has made the best choice."

PKR Wanita chief Zuraida Kamaruddin in a statement earlier today had criticised Najib's takeover of the Women, Family, and Community Development Ministry, saying it fails to set an example for women's participation in the public sector.

DAP Wanita chairperson Chong Eng had also described the move as a "betrayal" of the women's agenda.

She had questioned if the premier would be able to bear the responsibilities as he is also the finance minister.

