

Wanita Umno : no to EGM, no to Azalina
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Wanita Umno today decided not to support Gua Musang MP Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah's call for an Umno emergency general assembly (EGM) on May 11. MCPX

The wing's chief, Rafidah Aziz, said that although the wing respected the former Umno vice-president's suggestion, the focus now, however, was to make the party stronger following the battering it received in the recently held general election.

"Now it's not the time for anyone to 'menanggung di air yang keruh' (take advantage). It is time for the party to gel together."

rafidah aziz wanita umno pc 210308 04 "We have lost 5 states, don't worsen the situation." said Rafidah at a press conference after chairing the wing's exco meeting this morning

She said Razaleigh's call was not even discussed at the Wanita exco meeting as it was not relevant.

"To us, if the party is strong, it doesn't matter who calls for an EGM. It's not an issue." she elaborated.

Razaleigh, who has offered himself as a candidate for the Umno presidency, has called for a special general assembly to discuss Umno's bad showing in the recent polls.

Under the party's constitution, at least 50 per cent of Umno's divisions must agree to such an assembly before it can be convened.

Azalina's claim disputed

Rafidah also rejected claims made by former Puteri Umno chief Azalina Othman that she was the representative of the Wanita wing in the recently announced new cabinet line-up.

"Ask her, which division does she represent in the Wanita wing?" retorted Rafidah.

Rafidah said Wanita Umno would not question whether the wing was represented in the cabinet because the unity of its 1.3 million members was much more important.

rafidah aziz wanita umno pc 210308 01 Following the unveiling of the new cabinet on Monday, Wanita Umno had voiced its disappointment over its non-representation as Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi had dropped both Rafidah (right) and Shahrizat Abdul Jalil from his line-up.

He then subsequently appointed Shahrizat, the deputy Wanita chief, to be his special advisor on women, family and community development matters, giving her ministerial status.

Azalina, named the tourism minister in the new cabinet, had told reporters today at a separate function that the question of the Wanita wing having no cabinet representative 'did

not arise' as she was automatically a member of Wanita Umno having surpassed Pueteri Umno's age limit of 40 years of age.

However, one Wanita Umno exco member, when met after Rafidah's press conference, said although Azalina was now automatically a Wanita member, she couldn't claim to represent Wanita in the new cabinet because she was not a Wanita Umno exco member.

'Wanita will rise again'

Today's three-hour Wanita Umno exco meeting analysed the election defeats of the wing's candidates in five states and moves to mobilise its members to go to the ground together with the other Barisan Nasional component parties to regain support.

Deputy Wanita Umno chief, Shahrizat Abdul Jalil said the exco was strongly supporting Rafidah in her role as the wing's chief.

rafidah aziz wanita umno pc 210308 03She added although many parties wanted to see her and Rafidah at each other's throats, such a scenario would never happen as all Wanita Umno members were solidly with Rafidah.

"We must now plan how to win the next general election. Barisan Nasional is still relevant. Do not underestimate Wanita," said Shahrizat (left).

She also expressed her disappointment with an English newspaper columnist which had portrayed her relationship with Rafidah as damaged, saying it was a total fabrication.

Rafidah, meanwhile, said she and other Wanita members would go down to the grassroots to restore public confidence in Wanita Umno. She also praised the spirit shown by Wanita members following the shocking results of the March 8 polls.

'A challenge'

"We're both out of cabinet, we lost our posts (referring to Shahrizat) and as a normal human beings we should have been demoralised. I was expecting questions like 'What do I do next?' but they (the Wanita exco) are all ready to get back to work," she said.

Rafidah said the elections defeats suffered by Umno were a challenge, adding the losses 'have brought us together' and that Wanita Umno would rise again.

"I'll be busier than before," said Rafidah, nicknamed the 'Iron Lady'.