

Umno Youth told to 'defend' Shahrizat in NFC scandal
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KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 30 — Umno Youth members must defend Datuk Seri Shahrizat Jalil at all costs from Pakatan Rakyat's attacks over the National Feedlot Centre (NFC) scandal, one of its leaders said today.

Datuk Seri Reezal Merican Naina Merican, who is the party's youth wing information chief, said Umno has reached a "critical" level in light of upcoming polls, and that its members had a duty to defend "family."

"Shahrizat has got nothing to do with whatever is going on with NFC. Let investigations and the law take its due course.

"For the party, we must defend our family, not when one of our own is injured, we criticise," Reezal told Umno Youth delegates here during the wing's general assembly today.

He said that Umno Youth chief Khairy Jamaluddin was a shining example of an Umno leader who tirelessly defended the Wanita Umno chief since the scandal over the federally-funded cattle farming project first started.

"Khairy Jamaluddin said he defended Shahrizat because she is our eldest sister, Wanita chief, who has been in the forefront of defending Umno!" Reezal exclaimed.

Citing Pakatan Rakyat as an example, Reezal pointed out that "all of them" defended their leaders who were alleged to be involved in various scandals.

"Look at Elizabeth Wong, and that case involving a sex video of a leader; for their party, they defended them," he said.

The NFC is being investigated for cheating or criminal breach of trust over its purchase of two luxury condominium units here using government funds. NFC executive chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mohamad Salleh Ismail is Shahrizat's husband.

The minister has been under pressure from PKR to quit the Cabinet after a host of allegations emerged in recent weeks about improprieties involving the NFC, which is managed by her family.

Among the issues that have been raised by PKR were the use of public funds to acquire luxury condominiums and possible use of company money for the private expenses of minister's family.

Shahrizat maintained today that she has nothing to do with the company managed by her husband and children.

Instead, she challenged PRK Wanita chief Zuraida Kamaruddin to call for the resignation of party president Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Was Ismail over her husband, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's criminal charges.

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