

Cheras Umno: Shahrizat's husband must come clean about NFC
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KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 13 — Datuk Seri Shahrizat Jalil's husband should respond to opposition attacks on the National Feedlot Centre (NFC) as his silence will only hurt the party, an Umno division chief says.

Shahrizat's husband, Datuk Mohamed Salleh Ismail, is executive chairman of the publicly-funded cattle-raising scheme. He runs the NFC together with their children.

"Today, people talk about the NFC being linked to Umno and the party is accused of covering up embezzlement," Cheras Umno head Datuk Syed Ali Alhabshee said in his blog today.

"It's not fair because Umno has nothing to do with it."

Syed Ali pointed out that Umno branch and division leaders had to weather all sorts of allegations about the NFC, with critics claiming Umno was raising cattle for Shahrizat's benefit.

"How are we to respond and who should be responsible?" he asked.

He urged Mohamed Salleh to come clean about the NFC's dealings and repeated his call last week for Shahrizat (picture) to resign as women, family and community development minister.

"If there truly isn't any (embezzlement), state so openly and in detail. If in the wrong, take responsibility because the money belongs to the people," he said.

Syed Ali added that what was unfortunate Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak and Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin have been accused by the opposition of trying to protect Shahrizat and her family.

Shahrizat has denied any wrongdoing in the national cattle scheme, which has been hit by claims of financial impropriety ever since this year's Auditor-General's Report highlighted it as "a mess".

The former Lembah Pantai MP last week gained the backing of both Umno Youth and Wanita wings during the party's general assembly but has been faced by calls to step down from within the party itself.

Most recently, former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad told Shahrizat to know when to go and not wait to be "chased out" by her own colleagues.

Umno supreme council member Dr Mohd Puad Zarkashi too has urged Mohamed Salleh to be more aggressive in responding to allegations about the NFC so people do not continue blaming the government for the project's failures.

PKR has savaged Shahrizat and her family, who own and run the NFC, for allegedly misusing RM84 million in federal loans, including the RM13.8 million purchase of two luxury condominium units in Bangsar.

The opposition party also alleged millions were spent on a Mercedes-Benz car, land in Putrajaya, cash disbursements to companies belonging to Shahrizat's family and to pay for overseas tours.

The police are currently investigating the NFC for possible criminal breach of trust.

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