

**Bung Mokhtar sticks to stand that Shahrizat must quit over NFC**  
**The Malaysian Insider**  
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**By Shazwan Mustafa Kamal**

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 5 — Datuk Bung Mokhtar Radin today stood his ground and repeated his stand that Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil resign over the cattle scandal, despite growing criticisms from within Umno over his position.

The Kinabatangan MP's action has earned him the ire and scorn of Umno supporters, with pro-Umno bloggers criticising him and going out of their way to defend the embattled Shahrizat.

In response, the outspoken Umno supreme council member said he was "well aware" that his remarks have made him unpopular among members within his own party, but stressed that the reason he did so was out of concern for the future of the Malay party.

"If there are even little cracks within Umno, it can cripple and destabilise the party in the elections. Whether or not this move of mine is seen as part of a vested interest, it is up to people to judge," Bung Mokhtar (picture) told The Malaysian Insider.

"I do not expect my views to be agreed upon by all in my party. Everyone has differing views, so there will be a response, but I needed to say what has not been said," he said.

The senior lawmaker, who hails from Sabah, charged that it was his "responsibility" to speak out on the matter, saying that he wanted to avoid the issue being a liability to Umno.

"I do not deny that Shahrizat has brought a lot of good to Umno, to the country, but it is not enough when there are mistakes," he said.

In their attacks against Bung Mokhtar, pro-Umno bloggers have outlined Shahrizat's past achievements and contribution as Wanita chief and a Cabinet minister.

But the senior Barisan Nasional (BN) backbencher stressed that Umno needed to look at what was happening "right now," and how the National Feedlot Centre (NFC) issue was a dangerous one to the party if not dealt with effectively.

"Times are changing, people do not want to hear about history or past glories. We cannot continue to rely on Umno's history, we need to look beyond this," Bung Mokhtar said bluntly.

He appears to be the lone voice in addressing the touchy cattle scandal, as others appear to avoid or skirt the issue altogether.

When addressing delegates during the women wing's assembly, Shahrizat said she had nothing to do with the RM250 million federally-funded cattle farming project and instead urged PKR president Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail to resign over the allegations.

She reportedly earned wild applause from wing members during her speech.

The Malaysian Insider however understands that Shahrizat's explanation had failed to

satisfy a number of leaders in the party who, like Bung Mokhtar, believe the senior minister should bow out of the coming polls.

Bung Mokhtar has been openly critical of the NFC scandal and was the first Umno leader who called on Shahrizat to explain herself.

The Auditor-General's Report released last month had criticised the NFC, pointing out that it was now "in a mess".

The report said production in 2010 was only 3,289 head of cattle or 41.1 per cent of the target set.

But Agriculture Minister Datuk Seri Noh Omar responded on October 31 that the project was a success as it met its target of 8,000 cattle by 2010 once 5,742 slaughtered cattle were taken into account.

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