

## **Shahrizat to quit Cabinet post**

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PM expresses his gratitude

KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil said Sunday she will step down as Women, Family and Community Development Minister when her term as senator ends on April 8.

However she will remain as Wanita Umno chief.

In a response later Sunday, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak expressed his gratitude to Shahrizat for her decision and urged Wanita Umno members to continue giving their full cooperation to their leader.

He said in Pekan that although there was no proof that Shahrizat did anything wrong, she had made the right decision so as to not burden the Government.

Shahrizat told reporters: "I want to stress that I made the decision on my own. I love this nation and have the greatest respect for the government and the prime minister.

"I have nothing to do with NFC (National Feedlot Corporation). I just happened to be married to the chairman.

"I've been in politics a long time, and it is the right thing to do," she told reporters at Desa Water Park.

Shahrizat, who was surrounded by children and dandling a baby on her lap throughout the press conference, said she felt blessed for having the chance to serve the people.

"Serving the targeted groups under the ministry has been a joyful journey for me," she said, adding that it had brought meaning to her life.

The first-term senator's announcement comes after numerous allegations that her family had used an RM250mil federal loan meant for NFC to purchase land, property, and incurred expenses unrelated to cattle farming.

Headed by Shahrizat's husband Datuk Seri Mohamad Salleh Ismail and their three children, the NFC was meant to rear cattle for the National Feedlot Centre in Gemas, Negri Sembilan.

However, in 2010 the Auditor-General's Report pointed out that the NFC had missed production goals that lead to a barrage of revelations about NFC that put her family under an unfavourable spotlight.

The former Lembah Pantai MP had maintained that she had nothing to do with the NFC as she was "only the wife" of Salleh.

Since then, the publicly-funded firm has been repeatedly accused by opposition parties of using its government soft loan for purposes unrelated to cattle farming, including the purchase of luxury condominium units in Bangsar and Singapore, and land in Putrajaya.

The police recommended last month that the Attorney-General (AG) charge NFC's directors for criminal breach of trust, but the AG has requested that the police conduct further investigations.

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