

**Only RCI can close NFC book, says Pakatan**  
**The Malaysian Insider**  
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**By Shazwan Mustafa Kamal**

KUALA LUMPUR, March 13 — The National Feedlot Corporation (NFCorp) controversy remains a burning issue despite the fact that its chairman was finally charged in court yesterday with criminal offences, Pakatan Rakyat (PR) leaders said today.

PR lawmakers, who spoke to The Malaysian Insider, said the pressure is still on the government to initiate further investigations into “all parties” involved in the alleged abuse of public funds, and that the only way to do this would be by establishing a Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCI).

“It doesn’t change the fact that an RCI must be initiated to get to the bottom of the truth behind the NFC. Lest we forget, the then Ministers of Agriculture and Finance were also responsible in approving the project. They must be held accountable.

“The rakyat needs to know whether NFC represents the modus operandi for all Barisan Nasional (BN) projects,” PKR vice-president Nurul Izzah Anwar said.

“I believe sacrificial lambs such as a minister whose tenure is not renewed and charges against NFC personalities must not be used to silence the extent of a BN-initiated scandal,” she added, in reference to Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil and her husband, Datuk Seri Mohamad Salleh Ismail.

Such a high-profile charge happened in the first place because of pressure by Pakatan Rakyat. — Anthony Loke

Mohamad Salleh, who is NFCorp executive chairman, was charged yesterday in the Sessions Court here with criminal breach of trust (CBT) and violating the Companies Act in relation to RM49 million in federal funds given to the company.

He pleaded not guilty to the CBT charge as well as two counts under the Companies Act in the scandal that has opened Datuk Seri Najib Razak and the Barisan Nasional (BN) government to damaging attacks ahead of elections expected soon.

Nurul Izzah said the issue at hand is not about using NFC as a “weapon” or campaign fodder but about exposing how several state institutions have been used to protect a “clear misuse of public funds by an associate of a member in the Cabinet.”

“These facts alone continue to haunt the administration despite Shahrizat’s decision to ‘discontinue’ her tenure which was about to come to an end anyway.

“Fine, Salleh is charged. But clearly the Attorney-General (A-G) is stuck in inertia mode by not allowing all implicated to be brought to justice,” said the Lembah Pantai MP.

She stressed that Malaysians had a right to know the extent of the involvement of Cabinet ministers in approving the cattle-breeding project, and that responsible parties needed to be

brought to justice.

DAP national socialist youth (Dapsy) chief Anthony Loke said that Mohamad Salleh's charge was just one "glaring" example of a "crony capitalist" relationship between the government and Umno.

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"Such a high-profile charge happened in the first place because of pressure by Pakatan Rakyat.

"This is just one case. There are so many scandals we have exposed," Loke told The Malaysian Insider.

He said that PR would continue to pressure the government until everyone "connected" to the NFC scandal is charged in court.

Shahrizat announced on Sunday her decision to relinquish next month her Cabinet post as the women, family and community development minister. She, however, will continue as Wanita Umno chief despite being dogged for over four-and-a-half months by the NFC scandal.

NFCorp hit the national headlines after it made it into the Auditor-General's Report last year for missing production targets. Police recommended last month that the A-G charge NFCorp's directors for criminal breach of trust, but the A-G had asked the police to conduct further investigations prior to charging Mohamed Salleh.

The NFCorp mess is not the first corruption scandal to hit Najib and Umno, but the farmyard connection makes it a potentially damaging one because many ordinary Malaysians have a better understanding of what allegedly transpired than more obscure financial matters.

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