

PKR wants everyone linked to NFC as witnesses in Shahrizat suit
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By Clara Chooi

PETALING JAYA, March 7 — PKR leaders Zuraida Kamaruddin and Rafizi Ramli pledged today to call all those who have issued statements on the National Feedlot Centre (NFC) scandal as witnesses should Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil proceed with her RM100 million defamation suit against them.

The duo, who have been leading the series of exposes against Shahrizat and her family's alleged involvement in the scandal, also confirmed that they will file their statement of defence in response to the minister's suit in court this Friday.

Shahrizat filed a RM100 million defamation suit against PKR leaders Zuraida Kamaruddin and Rafizi Ramli last month. — file pic

"Rafizi and I have discussed in depth our defence strategy should Shahrizat's suit proceed after the court hears our submission on Friday," Wanita PKR chief Zuraida told a press conference today.

The Ampang MP expressed confidence that should the suit proceed and Shahrizat is called as a witness, the minister would have to reveal how she has personally spent time in the luxury condominium units her family allegedly purchased with NFC funds.

"This raises the question on whether she truly does not know her family had abused public funds to purchase properties for personal use, as she mentioned in her statement of claim.

"I am confident Malaysians are eager for this case to go to trial so that all senior Barisan Nasional (BN) leaders can be dragged in to give their statement," Zuraida said.

On February 17, the High Court ordered Rafizi, PKR's strategic director, and Zuraida to respond to Shahrizat's RM100 million defamation suit over the NFC controversy.

The women, family and community development minister had filed the suit against them on January 19 for alleging she misused a federal loan meant for the cattle-raising scheme.

Shahrizat's suit comes after months of allegations by PKR that she abused millions in federal funds earmarked for the NFC to pay for personal expenses incurred by her and her family.

The cattle-raising scheme is headed by Shahrizat's husband, Datuk Seri Mohamad Salleh Ismail, and their children.

The publicly-funded project, which hit national headlines following the Auditor-General's Report last year, has continued to hog the limelight after it was linked to Shahrizat's family.

The former Lembah Pantai MP has so far refused to heed calls from both the opposition and several Umno leaders that she resign over the allegations of abuse.

Earlier, de facto law minister Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz said the National Feedlot Corporation (NFCorp) operated by Shahrizat's husband and their three children had committed criminal breach of trust by using the government loan meant for cattle farming to fund other purchases.

PKR has made several claims of abuse over NFCorp's federal loan, involving over RM62 million spent on land, property and expenses unrelated to cattle farming.

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