

PKR duo file defence, counter-claim against Shahrizat
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PETALING JAYA, Mar 9 — PKR's Rafizi Ramli filed a counter-claim at the Kuala Lumpur High Court today over allegedly libellous remarks made against him by Datuk Seri Shahrizat Jalil at the last Umno general assembly.

The minister in charge of women, family and community development had called Rafizi a "traitor" during the gathering in November last year.

The PKR strategic director told reporters he and Zuraida Kamaruddin, who heads the party's women's wing, also filed their defence today against a RM100 million defamation suit by Shahrizat.

"This counter-claim will... ensure that the NFCorp (National Feedlot Corporation) case will go to court and key documents can be presented to the public," he said at PKR headquarters here.

"If we are the defendant and Datuk Seri Shahrizat is the plaintiff, she can decide to drop it, she can recall, she can delay. We want to turn the tables on her... Now we are the plaintiff and we will make sure this case will not be delayed on her side."

Rafizi (picture) and Zuraida pledged yesterday to call as witnesses anyone who has issued a statement on NFCorp should Shahrizat proceed with her defamation suit.

Shahrizat filed the suit against the PKR duo on January 19 for alleging that she had misused a RM250 million loan from the government earmarked for NFCorp to pay for personal expenses incurred by her and her family.

The publicly-funded cattle-rearing firm is headed by Shahrizat's husband, Datuk Seri Mohamad Salleh Ismail, and their three children.

It was tapped to run the National Feedlot Centre (NFC) in Gemas, Negeri Sembilan in 2006, when Shahrizat was holding her current Cabinet portfolio.

Shahrizat has so far refused to heed calls from the opposition and prominent Umno leaders to resign over the allegations of abuse in NFCorp.

She applied for three weeks' leave from her ministerial duties last month after new allegations of bribery surfaced and resumed work on February 8. She was called for questioning by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) the same day.

The former Lembah Pantai MP said at the weekend that it was up to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak to decide if she should remain as senator once her term expires next month.

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