

**Shahrizat: Senatorship up to PM**  
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KUALA LUMPUR, March 4 — Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil is leaving her future as senator in the hands of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

The women, family and community development minister's term as senator ends next month.

"Everything is up to the honourable Prime Minister," Shahrizat was quoted as saying by Bernama Online this evening.

Datuk Seri Najib Razak has said that it is his prerogative as the prime minister to decide Shahrizat's future. — file pic

The Wanita Umno chief's future in government hinges on Najib's decision.

A Dewan Negara senator's term lasts three years. Under the law, senators can only serve two terms.

Shahrizat was appointed senator on April 9, 2009, after being defeated in her Lembah Pantai parliamentary seat by PKR newcomer Nurul Izzah Anwar in Election 2008. She was named to her ministerial position the next day.

Najib has also told reporters previously that it is his prerogative as the prime minister to decide Shahrizat's future.

"No, no, not discussed here. And it is the prerogative of the prime minister," he told a press conference after the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition's supreme council meeting on February 15.

The sixth prime minister was commenting on Shahrizat's alleged refusal to resign from her political and government posts, despite widespread criticism over her alleged link to the ongoing National Feedlot Centre (NFC) controversy and from parliamentary backbenchers within her own party.

The senator was a member of the Cabinet that awarded the project to her family in 2006.

The NFC hit the headlines after it made it into the Auditor-General's Report last year, and has continued to hog the limelight after it was linked to Shahrizat and her family.

Shahrizat took three weeks' leave from ministerial duties last month to allow the authorities to complete their probe.

She was questioned by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) on her first day back at work.

Shahrizat has faced calls to resign from both opposition and Barisan Nasional (BN) leaders, including former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

But she has denied any wrongdoing, insisting that she is just the wife of Datuk Seri Mohamad Salleh Ismail, the executive chairman of the National Feedlot Corporation (NFCorp), the private company tasked with running the cattle-farming business. Their three children also hold executive posts in the company.

NFCorp has been accused repeatedly by PKR of siphoning off funds meant for the cattle-farming project and channelling them towards unrelated expenses like the purchase of several luxury condominium units in Bangsar and Singapore and land in Putrajaya as well as to fund personal umrah trips.

The company's assets were frozen after investigations were launched by the police and the national anti-graft body following the revelations.

The NFC was set up in 2007 to provide food security and attain 40 per cent self-sufficiency for beef production by 2015.

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