

Kamilia: Quit call made necessary by 'diseased' member
The Malaysian Insider
April 1, 2012
By Yow Hong Chieh

KUALA LUMPUR, Apr 1 — Wanita Umno vice chief Datuk Kamilia Ibrahim has defended her decision to call for Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil's resignation, saying she did not wish to see the wing carry a "diseased" member to the polls.

She had earlier asked Shahrizat to quit as Wanita Umno chief after the senator insisted she would continue to lead the 1.3-million strong wing despite relinquishing her Cabinet post following the National Feedlot Centre (NFC) scandal.

However, the duo then agreed to cooperate after peace talks with party leaders including president Datuk Seri Najib Razak and his deputy Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

But in an interview published by Utusan Malaysia's weekend edition today, Kamilia (picture) said that while it was important for Wanita Umno to show unity in the face of public attacks, "true solidarity" meant resolving critical problems together and not sweep them under the carpet.

"An obstacle needs to be dealt with and not just left to be. In war, if someone in the squad has a disease that can spread and may cripple the team, do we insist on bringing them to the battlefield?" she said when asked by Mingguan Malaysia why she did not back Shahrizat.

"Do we want all out team members to fall sick and die or do we quarantine the sick individual first until they recover so the team can advance to the battlefield? We as Wanita Umno need to know the true meaning of solidarity," she added in the interview.

The Kuala Kangsar division chief stressed that unity within Wanita Umno needed to be tempered by a clear objective, in this case, to win in the next general election which must be called by April next year.

She said that while it was necessary for the wing to show solidarity and strength, it should not ignore problems especially if they involved a key leader and could threaten the party's chances at the polls.

"In this matter, Wanita needs to clean its image so it does not appear as though it is embroiled in controversial issues," she told the Umno-owned paper.

She added that it was not her intention to split the wing but was acknowledging a problem that needed to be fixed.

"Unfortunately, there are some in Wanita who do not wish to listen to explanations, don't want to accept and understand the actual problem," she said.

Shahrizat announced on March 11 that she would step down as women, family and community development minister when her term as senator ends on April 8.

The announcement came after months of being dogged by allegations she and her family had abused a RM250 million federal loan meant for a cattle-rearing project to finance personal expenses.

Her husband Datuk Seri Mohamad Salleh Ismail, who heads the National Feedlot Corporation (NFCorp) with their three children, pleaded not guilty on March 12 to criminal breach of trust in relation to the alleged misuse of RM49 million in public funds.

The veteran politician, however, said she would remain as head of Wanita Umno despite previous calls from Kamilia and other senior party leaders — including Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad — to quit the post.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak has insisted that Shahrizat does not have to resign as Wanita Umno chief as there was no proof or charge of wrongdoing in the NFCorp scandal.

The Umno president also said he had met with Shahrizat and Kamilia and that the duo had agreed to cooperate despite the latter's repeated calls for Shahrizat to relinquish leadership of the wing.

"Both leaders will cooperate fully after this as a united team. They will work effectively together as a team," he had said.

The Malaysian Insider

Copyright © 2012 The Malaysian Insider

Source: <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/kamilia-quit-call-made-necessary-by-diseased-member/>