

# Syariah Court's 1st woman senior president to assume role on Oct 1

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A woman will, for the first time, be the senior president of the Syariah Court, from Oct 1.

From Saturday, Ms Guy Ghazali, 38, will understudy current senior president Alfian Yasrif Kuchit, 42, as the senior president-designate before taking on the role, said the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY) yesterday.

She will be the fourth senior president of the Syariah Court.

The Syariah Court, located in Bukit Merah, is an Islamic religious court that handles Muslim divorces and inheritance matters according to Muslim law.

The responsibilities of Syariah Court presidents include hearing and making judgments and orders on divorce cases.

The selection of a senior president is based on stringent criteria, including the candidate's qualifications, experience and temperament.

Ms Guy is a Legal Service officer and currently a district judge and assistant registrar in the Family Justice Courts.

She has served on the board that hears appeals against decisions made by the Syariah Court and the Registry of Muslim Marriages.

Before joining the Family Justice Courts, she was a lawyer in private practice, mainly practising family law, which included cases heard in the Syariah Court and the Appeal Board.

The Mufti of Singapore, Dr Nazirudin Mohd Nasir, who is the country's highest Islamic authority and oversees key religious rulings for Muslims here, said: "The judiciary is a complex institution that requires a high level of expertise in various disciplines.

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Asatizah refers to religious teachers.

In its statement yesterday, MCCY stressed the importance of ensuring that the Syariah Court is helmed by asatizah who are trained in both Muslim and civil law as the needs of Muslim families evolve and divorces become more complex.

The outgoing senior president, Ustaz Alfian, first served as president of the Syariah Court from 2011 to 2014. He assumed the post of senior president in 2017 following a stint in MCCY.

Ustaz Alfian, who will return to the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (Muis), will continue to serve as an ad-hoc president of the Syariah Court while pursuing a PhD at the National University of Singapore's Faculty of Law.

Dr Nazirudin has expressed his appreciation to Ustaz Alfian.

"Ustaz Alfian has led the Syariah Court with distinction as the first senior president trained in both Muslim and civil law," said the Mufti.

"I am pleased to know that he will continue to serve in the Syariah Court as an ad-hoc president as well as contribute in developing religious expertise among asatizah in the practice of Muslim family law."

