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Arrangement proposed for ex-SNAP reps

Sulok Tawie

KUCHING, Wed. - The elected representatives of the deregistered Sarawak National Party (SNAP) may choose to "park themselves temporarily" in any of the other State Barisan Nasional component parties until a permanent solution is found.

State BN chairman Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud, who is also the Chief Minister, told reporters today that the arrangement would "enable them to continue to serve the State BN and their constituents uninterrupted".

"The temporary parking is also to maintain the present balance of power within the State BN," he said after chairing a special meeting of the State BN.

Taib said the State BN had to make such a provision for them because, despite being members of the now deregistered SNAP, they had been elected on a BN ticket.

He said he had been informed that Environment and Public Health Minister Datuk William Mawan Ikom and eight others wanted to continue serving as elected representatives of the State BN.

Apart from Mawan, who is the State Assemblyman for Pakan, the others are Nyarok Entrie (Krian), Assistant Infrastructure Development and Communications Minister Dr Judson Sakai Tagal, Peter Nansian Ngusie (Tasik Biru) and Sylvester Entrie Muran (Marudi).

The MPs are Datuk Seri Peter Tinggom Kamarau (Saratok), Datuk Seri Tiong King Sing (Bintulu), Dr Tiki Lafe (Mas Gading) and Jacob Sagan Dugau (Baram).

Taib said Limbang State Assemblyman Richard Wong had yet to indicate his position.

"However, we are inviting him to temporarily park himself in any of the three component parties."

The 90-minute meeting, which was called following the deregistration of SNAP yesterday by the Registrar of Societies, Datuk Ismail Dolah Harun, for its failure to resolve its leadership crisis, was attended by the leaders of Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB), Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP) and Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak (PBDS).

Apart from PBB president Taib, the other PBB leaders present were deputy presidents Tan Sri Alfred Jabu and Datuk Seri Abang Johari Tun Openg and secretary-general Datuk Ambrose Blikau.

SUPP was represented by president Tan Sri Dr George Chan, secretary-general Datuk Sim Kheng Hui and treasurer-general Datuk David Teng.

PBDS was represented by deputy president Datuk Seri Daniel Tajem, vice-president Peter Runin and information chief and Minister of Social Development and Urbanisation Datuk Seri Dr James Masing.

The 41-year-old SNAP had been a member of the State BN since 1976, when it was admitted into the coalition government under former Chief Minister Tun Abdul Rahman Yaakob.

On the four political secretaries to the Chief Minister from SNAP, Taib said he would consult with their assigned State ministers on what needed to be done.

The political secretaries are Jelaing Mersat, John Lee, Joseph Jingtut and Stanley Jugol Sandin.

On SNAP councillors in local authorities, he said their positions would be decided when their current terms ended.

Taib said he preferred SNAP representatives in government corporations

and public utilities companies to continue until the expiry of their actual contracts.

He said, however, that the State BN was not interested in granting such temporary memberships to ordinary party members.

"They can choose what they want to do, but we will take care of their interests."

Taib said the State BN meeting also took note of the crisis in SNAP which had led to its eventual deregistration by the RoS.

"All this while we thought that the crisis could be resolved, but unfortunately, it could not," he said.

In Kuala Lumpur, Bernama reports Dr Tiki today said all SNAP members were now directly under BN chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Taib.

Members of the deregistered SNAP would remain loyal to BN and carry on with their duties, said Dr Tiki.

"We have pledged our loyalty to the BN leadership," he told reporters at Parliament House when asked about the deregistration of his party and the status of party members.

"For those appointed to Federal posts, it will be up to the Prime Minister to decide," said Dr Tiki, who is also Deputy National Unity and Social Development Minister.