

**Snap threatens to quit Pakatan
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Sarawak National Party (Snap) has threatened to withdraw from the Pakatan Rakyat coalition due to an apparent deadlock in seat allocation talks with PKR.

Both Snap and PKR are gunning for the rural seats including 29 Dayak-majority seats, while the DAP is going for the urban constituencies.

The straw that which 'snapped' the camel's back was a report by Malaysian Insider which quoted PKR deputy president Azmin Ali saying that negotiations with the party would begin with "nothing more than three seats".

The same report quotes Azmin saying that PKR plans to field candidates in 52 of the 71 seats. Various reports suggests that DAP is aiming for 20 seats and that negotiations are still ongoing.

Edwin-DundangAt a press conference after the party's central executive committee meeting today, Snap president Edwin Dundang (left) said his party was in a fundamental disagreement with PKR over the offer of just three seats.

"Since PKR does not seem to agree with our stand (to have more seats), we are now considering all options, including getting out of the opposition front," Dundang said.

He said PKR had also made overlapping claims on areas eyed by the DAP and PAS.

"If PKR contests 52 seats, that leaves 19 seats to be contested by Snap, DAP and PAS. What happens is that the DAP wants to contest in 16 or 17 Chinese areas, so what are there left for Snap and PAS to contest?" he asked.

Trying to avoid multi-cornered fights

Dundang explained that Snap had decided, in "good faith" to let PKR contest in Dayak majority Ba'Kelalan where its Sarawak chief Baru Bian was expected to stand, jokingly describing the former Snap-turned-PKR leader as "the better Dayak".

He said he hoped the dispute would be resolved during the meeting with its Pakatan partners tomorrow, otherwise, the prospect of Snap facing off against PKR in the polls looms.

"We don't want to see both Snap and PKR contesting the same seats against BN," he said. "I hope we can reach a compromise by tomorrow so we don't have to face each other in the elections."

Dundang also confirmed that this is the first time this year Snap will be entering formal discussions with PKR, PAS and DAP over seat allocations.

Snap's intention to contest 28 seats has yet to be formally communicated with the three parties.

With such a possibility in mind, he said Snap would announce "very soon" the names of its prospective candidates, even before the dissolution of the state legislative assembly was announced.

"This shows our seriousness in facing the election. At our central executive committee meeting today, we have decided to contest in at least 28 seats in the upcoming elections.

"Most of the people identified as candidates have moved on the ground for quite some time. As a mass party, the voters on the ground have been urged to step forward and inform Snap operations centres of their feedback on the suitability of their candidates.

"The final and formal decisions would be made after these 28 people have moved on the ground and elicit grassroots response," he said.

'Our demands are reasonable'

Dundang stressed that Snap had the "highest regards" for DAP and PAS as well as with Baru and his followers. He, however, declined to reveal whether the real problems lied with the PKR central leadership.

He said in line with its recent rebranding and rejuvenation exercise, the party now desired to be an equal partner in the opposition front.

"This, we think, is not something that is unreasonable, but we note with dismay that PKR has adopted a patronising attitude towards Snap, particularly when it comes to seat allocation," he said.

"Snap is one of the long-established parties in Sarawak, having been registered on April 10, 1961 in Kuching, with the exception of its forced hiatus during the period of deregistration by the Registrar of Societies, our network has remained, and its membership has remained robust all this while," he he said.

Dundang also reminded the PKR leadership that the real enemy was not Snap, but BN in the coming elections.

He said Snap wanted the ouster of those who had been guilty of excesses in the government and an end to land grabbing by unscrupulous characters.

"Despite of the fact that Sarawak is a rich state, there is still much poverty, particularly in the rural areas.

"Snap, therefore, calls for serious attention to be paid to policy development that would really benefit the people," he added.