

**Tee Keat: No other seat for me than Pandan**  
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**By Lee Way Loon**

INTERVIEW As the current political environment continues to neglect marginal groups, former MCA president Ong Tee Keat has joined Angkatan Amanah Merdeka (Amanah), a non-governmental organisation founded by Umno maverick Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah.

Admitting he has lost his political clout after being ousted as party president in March 2010, Ong said Amanah offered him a platform to voice his views.

"Though the party leadership says you can voice out your opinions..., but I am no longer in the mainstream..., so how much impact I can make is another matter," he told *Malaysiakini* in an interview last week.

He said Amanah does not have any "old rules or rigid restrictions" like mainstream political parties.

The NGO, which was launched in July, aims to revive the "sense of togetherness and true family spirit that prevailed among all Malaysians during the time of the common struggle for national independence".

'Third force' in the making

Besides Ong (*above*), Amanah's other central council members include former tourism minister Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir, former MIC deputy president S Subramaniam, Sabah's United Pasokmomogun Kadazan Dusun Murut Organisation (Upko) deputy president Wilfred M Bumburing, veteran Sarawak opposition politician Daniel Tajem, former Bar Council president K Ragnath and former Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (Suhakam) commissioner Simon Sipaut.

While not excluding the possibility that Amanah may turn out to be a "third force" or a political party in the future, Ong stressed that Amanah was not formed to contest in the 13th general election.

Asked about the feedback from BN leadership, Ong said Amanah has had no interaction with them yet, but Amanah believes that it is "under the establishment's watch".

The Pandan MP also claimed that "the establishment had even sent intelligence units and representatives from mainstream media to pry on us".

"If you want to pry, you can just come to us, we don't have anything to hide," he said, adding that there was no need for the MCA leadership to be overly sensitive.

Asked about his own future, he reiterated that he will recontest in Pandan and would not consider any other seat.

He said it was up to the rakyat and not the party leadership to decide on his political future.

"I will not let the leadership to decide everything... I don't think my fate should be decided by the person who is holding power in the party now," he said, referring to his successor Dr Chua Soi Lek.

"Maybe he's got his hidden agenda and plans, or perhaps his own resentment. Should I surrender under these circumstances? I don't think so," he added.

Ong also claimed that a Pakatan Rakyat component party had approached him to cross over, but he would not divulge any details.

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