

## **MCA divided over joining BN government**

**MalaysiaKini.com**

**May 9, 2013**

In the aftermath of the greatest electoral defeat in its 64-year history, MCA is expected to undergo another round of intense infighting.

This could result in an extraordinary general assembly (EGM) to axe current president Dr Chua Soi Lek and overturn the party's decision not to join the government.

The resolution rejecting all government posts, from ministership to village heads should the party perform worse than it did the 2008 general election, was proposed by Soi Lek and endorsed by the party's 2011 and 2012 annual general meetings.

NONEAfter the results were known on Sunday night, various MCA divisions controlled by Soi Lek's loyalists sent in their resignation letters to pull their representatives out of local councils.

Soi Lek (left) himself also announced he would resign as Penang port chairperson after meeting with Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak, but would continue his tenure as party president until the next party election, slated to be held within six months.

Those not aligned with Soi Lek's camp have launched movement dubbed "Save Party Committee 3.0" to oust him.

Committee chief Chuah Poh Khiang, who is also Titiwangsa MCA division chairperson, told Sin Chew Daily that the president was given an ultimatum to resign within this week.

The decision to reject all government posts, Chuah said, should be determined by the new leadership, after Soi Lek stepped down.

Past also throws hat in ring

Not only at grassroots level, it is said that differences over MCA's post-GE13 role in the BN also existed among the seven MCA MPs.

Deputy president Liow Tiong Lai (Bentong), Youth chief Wee Ka Siong (Ayer Hitam), Wee Jeck Seng (Tanjong Piai) and Ong Ka Chuan (Tanjung Malim) are said to have reservations over the decision not to join the government, while Khoo Soo Seang

(Tebrau), Koh Nai Kwong (Alor Gajah) and Chua Tee Yong (Labis) support Soi Lek's decision.

The infighting may see a revival in the influence of former MCA president Ong Ka Ting in the party as Liow, Ka Siong and Jeck Seng were once his staunch supporters. Ka Chuan is his older brother.

Ka Chuan reportedly said DAP should consider joining BN to represent the Chinese, but if it refuses, then MCA should reconsider its decision not to accept government posts.

"MCA believed it would gain the support of the Chinese by raising the issue of not joining the government if the electoral results were worse than that of the 2008, but the results on May 5 proved that its move failed.

"Hence, should MCA pass an emergency resolution through its presidential council, central committee and general assembly to rescind the decision not to join the government?" today's issue of Sin Chew Daily quotes Chuah as saying.

He said although Najib could appoint leaders from Chinese associations and professionals to represent the community in the cabinet, they may not understand the demands of their community well.

Ka Chuan said the Chinese have the right to power sharing in the cabinet and that this could not be rejected by the MCA because of its electoral setback.

Associations also on dilemma's horns

The split over MCA's status in government has also become a cause for concern among Chinese associations.

Both the Federation of Chinese Associations of Malaysia (Huazong) and the Kedah Chinese Assembly Hall have urged the MCA, and Gerakan as well, to review their decisions, asking both parties to call for an EGM or central committee meetings as soon as possible.

Huazong deputy chairperson and Kedah Chinese Assembly Hall chairperson Cheng Lai Hock told Sin Chew Daily that the decision on government posts should be determined by all party members, not just by the president.

However, overturning MCA's previous decision, which has been endorsed not once but twice by party delegates at their general assemblies, may further degrade the

party that has been rejected by Chinese voters.

This warning came from former MCA secretary-general Ting Chew Peh, who warned that the party would lose its credibility.

Ting told The Star that disciplinary action could be taken against party members going against the resolution adopted by the general assembly, MCA's highest decision-making body.

Those bent on taking up government positions, he added, could do so but must resign from the party first.

Current MCA secretary-general Kong Cho Ha, who was unhorsed by PKR in Lumut, today called on party members to stay calm and united.

He said the party would review the electoral results at its presidential council meeting on Saturday and members should not be quick to point fingers at certain leaders as this would tarnish the party's image and reputation.

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