

SUPP rejects merger with MCA and Gerakan

MalaysiaKini.com

July 23, 2013

By Dukau Papau

Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP) has rejected a merger with MCA and Gerakan, citing problems that need to be surmounted as well as major differences between them.

"There are few obstacles to surmount if we merge with MCA and Gerakan. They are Chinese parties, while we are a multi-racial party," said SUPP president Peter Chin (right).

The merger talks surfaced again after poor showing by the three parties in the recent general election. The merger between them had been discussed as early as in the 80s.

Chin, who is the former energy, green technology and water minister, admitted he had met MCA leaders unofficially a number of times over the merger.

"We only talked informally. We have not received any letter from MCA leaders. Since the talks were informal, I have yet to bring this matter up with the central working committee of the party," he said.

"Personally, I think it is difficult to have a merger with MCA as there are a few obstacles to surmount.

"But if we want to see a closer rapport among the three Chinese-based parties, it is better to have a loose confederation where there will be a win-win situation for everybody rather than a merger," he added.

When asked about the problems, Chin refused to elaborate except to say that SUPP is a multi-racial party, while MCA a pure Chinese party.

Two major problems

SUPP has two major problems arising from its poor showing in the last two elections as well as leadership problems after the party's election in December 2011.

About 30 percent of SUPP's members are Dayaks. For now, it depends heavily on Dayak members to be its pall-bearers after its six Chinese candidates lost in the May 2013 parliamentary election and 13 candidates lost in the 2011 state election

in Chinese majority seats.

In the parliamentary election, SUPP won only one seat through Richard Riot. Despite being a Bidayuh, Riot has been appointed as a federal minister to represent not only SUPP but also the Chinese community.

In the state, SUPP has to defend four Dayak assemblypersons to be relevant after it lost 13 of 15 Chinese seats.

Another major problem faced by SUPP is that it is deeply divided into two factions – one headed by Chin and the other by Wong Soon Koh, SUPP Sibul chairperson and a senior minister in the state cabinet.

Wong's faction including five state assemblypersons - Dr Jerip Susil (Bengoh), Ranum Mina (Opar), Francis Harden (Simanggang), Johnichal Rayong (Engkilili) and Lee Kim Shin (Senadin) - question Chin's authority to lead the party and to negotiate a merger with MCA and Gerakan after he was "irregularly" elected as president.

"How can he talk about merger when his authority is being questioned" asked a spokesperson from Wong's faction.

He said SUPP's future is uncertain after the alleged party branch election irregularities are now under probe by the Registrar of Societies.

"The party may face deregistration if the ROS is not happy with its reply and explanation to the show-cause letter issued last month. So what is the point of talking about a merger?" he asked.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd
Source: <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/236445>