

**Jamal's chequered ties with Chua**  
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EXCLUSIVE Never mind that Ibrahim Ali-led Perkasa wants MCA president Dr Chua Soi Lek put away under the Internal Security Act.

chua soi lek 020108As far as suspended 988.fm radio disc jockey Jamaluddin Ibrahim is concerned, the Pasir Mas MP and Chua (left) are just two sides of the same coin.

In fact the MCA man is even worse, he caustically said during an interview with Malaysiakini yesterday.

"At least Ibrahim Ali does not touch on issues of religion," he said, still smarting over Chua's statement which reminded the deejay, a Muslim, to act appropriately in the holy month of Ramadan.

Chua had said this in response to a misreport by online news portal Merdeka Review which claimed that Jamal had met the former five times.

The portal has since issued an apology to both parties, but Chua has refused to say sorry for commenting on the deejay's religion.

In the same statement, Chua had denied having a hand in Jamal's suspension from the MCA-owned radio station on Aug 19, after the station received a letter from the Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission (MCMC).

In the letter, he was said to be "threatening national security" and "compromising race relationships" during an interview with columnist Ouyang Wen Feng on the Hi Malaysia talk-show on Aug 13.

The radio station's chief executive officer Wong Lai Ngo and senior programme manager Tan Chia Yong, although not mentioned in the MCMC letter, were later also suspended.

NONThe station's immediate owner Star RFM's chairperson Linda Ngiam (left) said the suspensions were not politically-motivated and were management decisions.

'Chua used to call me si fu'

According to the Beijing-educated deejay, his relationship with Chua was not always this rocky, and had only turned sour when the latter became MCA president.

"He called me si fu (master) before he became (party) president...but now he never even smiles at me. Very serious.

"(But I know) he was only nice to me so that I wouldn't criticise him too much" said the current affairs breakfast show host.

This is hardly surprising, considering the fact that the deejay had taken a rather staunch position against Chua in the long drawn-out MCA leadership crisis.

Jamal was, however, decidedly coy when quizzed about his allegiance to Chua's rival and former MCA president Ong Tee Keat.

"I can be labeled as a supporter of Ong, but you really don't know whether I am a real supporter or not," he said.

988 hi malaysia old dj koh kok weeBe that as it may, Jamal's hard-line stance on the current affairs breakfast show was said to have 'forced' his co-host Koh Kok Wee (right) to huddle in Chua's corner.

Koh's apparent efforts to balance out the show was said to not endear him to the then-party president and cost him his co-host post when he was later taken off the air.

For Jamal, however, what happened to his colleague, who "is still a friend", was not politically-motivated even though Koh "really does not like Ong".

"If you want to argue every time during the programme, it will be quite noisy. So the management made a decision to make (Koh return to his position) chief editor. They never fired or suspended him.

"If (Koh was removed) by Ong and I was (removed) by Chua, then who removed our CEO?... (In Ong's time) I didn't feel any interference," he said.

It was the same assurance of media freedom which Jamal thought he had obtained from the new president when he met the new president on May 3.

Blackout from Chinese-language press

This is despite his self-confessed direct attacks on the MCA president's standing following the split in the party.

"(I told him) you are not a very strong president. You only got 901 votes. Now you are the president but if Ong Ka Ting and Ong Tee Keat had combined, you would have lost.

"(But) he promised many times that he does not want to interfere with radio and press freedom affairs. I hope he can keep his word, but people can find out at a later stage. There is a lot of truth to prove what he has done," he said.

NONEWhile he neither revealed the "proof" nor directly named Chua and MCA as the culprits in the 988.fm fiasco, Jamal's disappointment with the party president is evident.

Likewise, he felt let down by his colleagues in the Chinese-language newspapers, who have apparently blacked out his side of the story and given prominence to Chua instead.

"I am very confused and sad (because) the Chinese media - Sin Chew Jit Poh, Nanyang Siang Pau, China Press - did not want to publish my statement. Not a single word.

"They gave a lot of space to Chua. When you compare Jamal and Chua, I think they hate me more," he said.

Despite his less-than-friendly opinion of the MCA president, Jamal is open and even hopeful of returning to helm the popular show.

It is the same logic which he employed when deciding to join the party-owned station, despite his heavy criticism of MCA.

"This is only a platform for you to make comments. If I can have such a platform to communicate with my audience, why not?"

"You should read the comments left on my Facebook page. Millions feel that their minds have been changed by listening to (Hi Malaysia). It's a huge influence, they never had this kind of programme," he said.

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