

**BN MP quits, may join PKR**  
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**Tony Thien**

Serian MP Richard Riot from Sarawak has resigned from Supp along with many party members from his constituency after he was not appointed a deputy minister in the federal cabinet. MCPX

Richard, a Bidayuh, is a five-term MP for Serian. He first won the seat as an Independent in 1990 and joined predominantly Chinese Supp in order to keep his seat as a BN legislator as Serian is a traditional Supp seat.

richard riot 200308Richard submitted his resignation letter to Supp president Dr George Chan Hong Nam on the same day that Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi announced his new cabinet line-up on Tuesday.

A veteran party member, acting as a spokesperson for the Serian MP, confirmed to Malaysiakini rumours that Richard had quit the party along with a number of his supporters and members of the five sub-branches of the Serian Supp branch. Each sub-branch has more than 1,000 members.

Requesting anonymity, the spokesperson said after the letter was submitted to Chan, the party president sent his secretary-general Sim Kheng Hui to Serian hoping to meet Richard and talk him out of it.

"But Richard was nowhere to be found," he added.

According to the spokesperson, many party members in Serian, mostly Bidayuh, had surrendered their membership cards and sent them all in a bag to the party president together with the resignation letter.

The party flags at the Serian branch office had also been taken down and burned by angry members.

### **No Dayak interests at heart**

In the letter, Richard was said to have told Chan, who is one of Sarawak's two deputy chief ministers, that the party did not have Dayak interests at heart.

Chan was accused of engaging in a musical chair by putting up four names from the party to be considered by the prime minister when in fact he had already known the quota for the party was only three - one full minister and two deputy ministers.

The four names were Peter Chin, Miri MP, Robert Lau, Sibu MP, Yong Khoon Seng, Stampin MP and Richard Riot.

Richard won the just-concluded election for a fifth term with an impressive 13,427-vote majority, defeating his sole Snap opponent Sylvester Belayong Jayang. The Serian parliamentary seat has 27,901 registered voters, 80 percent of whom are Bidayuhs.

With his resignation, Supp is now left with five MPs, having lost one to DAP incumbent Chong Chieng Jen in Bandar Kuching. All the remaining five MPs are Chinese.

Richard is expected to be an Independent MP in Parliament although there are reports that he has shown interest in joining PKR.

### **Overlooked for second time**

Richard, who once served as chairperson of the Sarawak River Board had expressed his displeasure at not being nominated for a government post even after the 2004 parliamentary elections.

Party leaders recommended him for the Sarawak River Board chairman post to assuage his feelings and promised that he would at least be made a parliamentary secretary after the recent elections.

Meanwhile, one of his aides told Malaysiakini that Richard has gone to Singapore and is incommunicado. All attempts by senior Supp leaders to reach him have failed.

Even Supp secretary-general Sim Kheng Hui himself is not taking calls from the media. He tried to meet Richard yesterday, but failed to do so after travelling to Serian, 60km southeast of Kuching.

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