

**SUPP Presidential Hopeful Wong, Group Threaten To Boycott Delegates Conference
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SIBU, Dec 8 (Bernama) -- It appears as if the Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP) Triennial Delegates Conference (TDC), beginning this weekend, has been dealt a crippling blow.

A group aligned to one of the presidential hopefuls, Datuk Sri Wong Soon Koh, who is also party deputy secretary-general, has decided to boycott the TDC.

This was stated in a press statement issued here today by Wong and his group which includes Serian and Lanang members of parliament Datuk Richard Riot anak Jaem and Datuk Tiong Thai King, respectively.

The others are state assemblymen Datuk Francis Harden anak Hollis(Simanggang), Datuk Lee Kim Shin (Senadin), Dr Jerip anak Susil (Bengoh), Ranum anak Mina (Opar) and Dr Johnical Rayong Ngipa (Engkilili) and their respective delegates and supporters.

Wong, 69, the state minister of local government and community development, is facing SUPP organising secretary Datuk Peter Chin Fah Kui, 66, who is also energy, green technology and water minister, for the president's post.

"We have decided that we will not participate in the TDC due to claims of irregularities and manipulations in the branch elections.

"We will not legitimise the TDC by our participation due to complaints by many members to the Registrar of Societies (ROS)," said Wong, adding that they were worried that many of their grassroots supporters were emotionally-charged by such claims.

"Many of them have called us to express unhappiness and frustration, saying if nothing was done to rectify the wrong-doings and irregularities, they would stage a big protest and demonstration during the TDC and also resign en bloc."

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak is expected to officiate the TDC this Sunday. Sarawak Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud is expected to be present.

Wong said: "We will withdraw from the TDC to prevent any untoward incident. We had requested that a Central Working Committee (CWC) be convened to deal with the complaints by branch members over irregularities in branch elections but party president Tan Sri Dr George Chan Hong Nam has refused to look into this."

He said it would be wrong for his team to participate and give legitimacy to an election which "cannot be free or fair due to claims of irregularities in the party branch elections".

Wong said his group was of the view that the correct approach to take should be to postpone the TDC, urge the CWC to conduct a full investigation into complaints of irregularities in branch, hold fresh elections in respect of the affected and convene the TDC only after all irregularities were rectified.

"We urge our supporters and fair-minded SUPP members not to participate in the TDC unless and until all wrong-doings at branch elections are redressed by the CWC," he added.

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