

MCA not your 'Mafia', Tee Keat tells Soi Lek
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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 2 — Former MCA president Datuk Seri Ong Tee Keat has fired back at his successor for asking him to leave the party today, pointing out that MCA was not the Mafia and did not exist to serve one man's whims and fancies.

Ong said it was unclear if Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek had urged him to resign from the party or his MP post, but said the call served to expose the latter's "sheer arrogance and disrespect" for democracy.

"He bluntly asked me to resign as a parliamentarian but had visibly forgotten that my MP post has never been a political appointment bestowed by him but was mandated by the people of Pandan in March 2008," he said in a statement carried on his blog.

Ong said no president before Dr Chua had openly asked a member to ship out simply for losing faith in the party leadership and reminded the former Labis MP that MCA was not its president's private property.

"Neither should the party be run like a Mafia purely at the whims and fancies of the helmsman, if at all he has an iota of respect for democracy," he said.

Ong sparked a war of words with Dr Chua last week after insisting that MCA was doomed to "irrelevance" so long as it did not heed the call to reform by its ethnic support base.

He accused his party of "parroting old polemics" rather than delivering change after Chinese voters abandoned MCA in the last general election, leaving it with just 15 wins in 31 incumbent seats.

In response, Dr Chua told the former transport minister he should cease contesting under the Barisan Nasional (BN) banner and resign from the party if he had no faith in it, adding that Ong was a "footnote" in the history of MCA.

Ong continued to defend his remarks today, saying that he was merely conveying to the party leadership the public's perception of MCA, and urged Dr Chua to take serious note of it.

"True, I have lost my faith in his leadership but that should in no way be misconstrued as losing my faith in the party I chose to join in 1981," he said.

"As to whether I would become a mere footnote of the MCA's history, it is certainly not for him to judge or conclude."

Ong, who was deposed by Dr Chua in a fractious power struggle 18 months ago, has admitted he failed to convince the party to change its mindset during his short-lived term in office.

But he took pride in being responsible for opening investigations into the RM12.5 billion Port

Klang Free Zone (PKFZ) scandal even though senior officers had told him it was a closed case.

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