

**Senior Sarawak leaders quit Barisan affiliates to join new party**  
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**By DESMOND DAVIDSON**

Two veteran Sarawak politicians from Barisan Nasional have quit their respective parties to join a new party formed last year.

Sarawak Democratic Progressive Party (SPDP) president Tan Sri William Mawan (pic) and Datuk Seri Wong Soon Koh, the former deputy secretary-general of the Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP), said today they have quit to join Parti Tenaga Rakyat Sarawak (Teras) – one of five parties that had its registration approved late last year.

“This is not a case of abandoning ship. There's a mutiny on board and we have been elbowed out,” Mawan said of his decision to walk out of the party he founded in November 2002.

Mawan had been facing a revolt in SPDP led by deputy president Tan Sri Tiong King Sing.

Four other former SPDP assemblyman Datuk Peter Nansian (Tasik Biru), Datuk Sylvester Entrie (Marudi), Paulus Palu Gumbang (Batu Danau) and Rosey Yunus (Bekenu) – and its Baram MP Anyie Ngau have followed Mawan out of the party.

Meanwhile, Wong, who is Sarawak's Second Finance Minister, is also joined by SUPP's three Dayak assemblymen – Datuk Dr Jerip Susil (Bengoh), Ranum Mina (Opar), Johnical Rayong (Engkilili).

Mawan said Teras would soon apply to join the Barisan Nasional.

Seen with the group at the news conference in the state legislative assembly media room was deputy president of the Sarawak Workers' Party (SWP) and Pelagus assemblyman, George Lagong.

Mawan's rift with Tiong, the Member of Parliament for Bintulu, started when he (Mawan) accepted newly appointed Chief Minister Tan Sri Adenan Satem's proposed peace plan by

readmitting four sacked assemblymen.

The four - Nansian; Entrie;Gumbang and Rosey – were sacked for alleged “gross insubordination”, a euphemism for acting to kickstart merger talk with fellow BN component party, Parti Rakyat Sarawak (PRS).

The one and only condition PRS had made for the talk was that Tiong would have no place in the merged party.

Tiong, with his financial clout, then started his political manoeuvring in what he believed were constitutional moves to remove Mawan.

He managed to get the women and youth wings to pass a motion of no confidence on Mawan.

“I've been elbowed out after quite a tussle. The presidency had become quite untenable,” he said in the announcement at the state legislative assembly media centre.

His departure left SPDP, born in similar circumstances as Teras, without any assemblyman and only two MPs – Tiong himself and the MP for Mas Gading Anthony Nogeh.

Mawan hinted Nogeh, a known Tiong loyalist, is “on the way” (to joining them).

Wong said he quit SUPP after a peace deal brokered by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak fell through.

Wong had been left in political limbo after he questioned the party's triennial delegates conference in 2011 and reported alleged irregularities.

To sort out the leadership squabble, Najib had proposed that the SUPP defer all elections in the party and its policy making central working committee (CWC) be made up of half of party president Tan Sri Peter Chin's men and the other half of Wong's men.

That deal fell apart when the Registrar of Societies declared there were no irregularities

committed in the 2011 TDC and pulled back its threat to deregister the party.

Wong said he and his supporters then decided to leave and join Teras since nothing was forthcoming.

"I'm forced out too.

"I was given a show-cause letter and there is a letter to sack me somewhere," he said.

"We (Mawan and him) are in the same boat," he said of their identical path to joining Teras.

Mawan said he anticipated SPDP and SUPP would try to block Teras' application to join the BN and leave it up to Chief Minister Tan Sri Adenan's wisdom in considering their application. – May 15, 2014

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