

160 AWARE members call for meeting to question new ExCo

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SINGAPORE : 160 members of the Association of Women for Action and Research (AWARE) have submitted a request to call an extraordinary general meeting for the society, where a motion of no confidence in the newly-elected Executive Committee (ExCo) will be considered.

It all started at the AWARE annual general meeting on March 28.

Nine of the 12 Executive Committee positions went to newcomers during that meeting. Over 100 people had turned up to vote and many of these voters had only just joined AWARE.

Some of the newcomers have previously written to the media speaking against homosexuality. AWARE, on the other hand, is known for its liberal stance.

"It (AWARE) stands for choice, it stands for gender equity, it stands for democracy, it stands for diversity, plurality. That's why our membership has always been open," said Corinna Lim, a former Executive Committee member and AWARE member since 1992.

When asked for their reasons for seeking leadership, the new ExCo members declined comment.

"We told you that ExCo is going to be meeting sometime this week, after which there will be a press release. So there is no comment," said Charlotte Wong, VP of AWARE.

Its newly-elected President, Claire Nazar, a longtime member of AWARE, resigned barely two weeks after being voted in.

Some past presidents in the meantime, have been collecting signatures to call for an extraordinary general meeting - prompting some observers to comment that they are behaving like sore losers.

"We welcome change, it is not about losing at all. Someone from a different group came in, have certain ideas about what AWARE should be doing and hasn't communicated it, and all we want to know now is what this is about," said Lim.

"The extraordinary general meeting is an opportunity for the new guard to explain their position and win the members over. We can't really comment whether they will hold fast to the traditional line of AWARE, but I can't imagine why not, if they chose to enter AWARE and run for office there," said political analyst Gillian Koh.

The current committee has not replied to members' request to hold the meeting.

AWARE has about 500 members.