

PRESS RELEASE

ISSUANCE OF CORRECTION DIRECTION UNDER THE PROTECTION FROM ONLINE FALSEHOODS AND MANIPULATION ACT (POFMA) TO POLITICAL SOPHISTRY

The Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, Ms Indranee Rajah, has instructed the POFMA Office to issue a Correction Direction to Political Sophistry for their article "Upfront and transparent? A timeline of the CPIB investigation into Transport Minister Iswaran" published on 16 July 2023 ("Article"). The Article falsely conveyed that:

- a. On 12 July 2023, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong ("PM") and Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Wong ("DPM Wong") did not want to disclose the fact of Mr Iswaran's arrest because it was politically embarrassing.
- b. In his doorstep interview on 12 July 2023, DPM Wong deliberately withheld information that two arrests had been made in connection with the case because he wanted to conceal the truth.

2 These statements are false.

- a. The Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau ("CPIB") issued a press release on 12 July 2023 stating that Minister Iswaran was assisting CPIB with an investigation.
- b. PM's statement of 12 July 2023 and DPM Wong at his doorstep interview on the same day kept to what CPIB had announced. PM and DPM did not want to deviate from what CPIB had announced in its statement since this is related to operational matters. It is CPIB's call to make, on the operational information it was comfortable to provide in the CPIB's press releases.
- c. On 14 July 2023, CPIB provided an update in response to media queries, stating that Minister Iswaran and Mr Ong Beng Seng were arrested on 11 July 2023, and subsequently released on bail.

3 For the facts of this case, please refer to the Factually article "Corrections regarding false statements of fact in Political Sophistry article "Upfront and transparent? A timeline of the CPIB investigation into Transport Minister Iswaran" (<https://www.gov.sg/article/factually200723-a>).

4 Political Sophistry will be required to carry a correction notice¹ at the top of the article and at the top of the main page of their website, so that readers can read both versions and draw their own conclusions.

¹ A Correction Direction is a Direction issued to a person who has communicated a falsehood (i.e. the recipient) that affects the public interest. It requires the recipient to publish a correction notice, providing access to the correct facts. The Direction does not require the recipient to take down their post or make edits to their content and does not impose criminal sanctions.

20 July 2023