



PRESS RELEASE

ISSUANCE OF CORRECTION DIRECTION AND TARGETED CORRECTION DIRECTION UNDER THE PROTECTION FROM ONLINE FALSEHOODS AND MANIPULATION ACT REGARDING STATEMENT BY THE SINGAPORE DEMOCRATIC PARTY ON THE CHARGES BROUGHT AGAINST THREE WOMEN FOR THEIR ALLEGED INVOLVEMENT IN ORGANISING A PROCESSION TO THE ISTANA

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is aware of the posts published by the Singapore Democratic Party (SDP) on Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok on 27 and 28 June 2024, regarding the charges brought against Ms Annamalai Kokila Parvathi, Ms Siti Amirah Mohamed Asrori, and Ms Mossammad Sobikun Nahar for their alleged involvement in organising a procession to the Istana.

Falsehoods

2. The posts make the following false statements:
 - a. That the three women were prosecuted for organising support for the Palestinian people in the ongoing Gaza war, in the form of a procession to the Istana; and
 - b. That the Government, and in particular Minister K Shanmugam, prosecuted the three women because they had expressed views that the Government did not agree with.

Facts

3. The three women were charged for an offence under Section 15(1) of the Public Order Act 2009 (“**POA**”), for organising a procession in a prohibited area designated under Section 12 of the POA and the Public Order (Prohibited Areas) Order (i.e. in the vicinity of the Istana). The SDP’s posts falsely suggested that the three women were instead charged for organising support for the Palestinian people.

4. The decision to charge the three women was not in response to the views they had expressed, nor depended on whether these views concurred or did not concur with the Government’s views. The charges concern the organising of the unauthorised procession, in and of itself. Second, the decision to charge the three women was not made by Minister K Shanmugam, as the SDP posts had suggested. The decision to charge the three women was made by the Attorney-General’s Chambers, after its review of the Police’s investigative findings. The Minister does not make decisions relating to criminal prosecutions.

5. MHA would like to reiterate that the three women were charged for offences under the POA, for their alleged involvement in organising a procession in the vicinity of the Istana, which is a designated prohibited area. Any person who organises a public assembly or a procession in a designated prohibited area would have committed an offence, regardless of the cause or issue he or she is advocating for. Prohibited areas are security sensitive areas, and also include the Parliament House and the Supreme Court.

6. These laws exist to maintain the public peace and order which Singaporeans enjoy today. We only need to look overseas at the countries which allow public protests and demonstrations, to understand the disruption to daily lives, not to mention damage to properties and hurt to bystanders and participants, that can result.

7. We know that some Singaporeans feel strongly about the Israel-Hamas conflict, in support of both sides of the conflict. The very large majority of these views have been expressed in lawful ways, online and also during the many forums and dialogues that have been organised by the authorities and other entities, as well as through support for donation drives. The Government did not take any action against them, whether or not the views concurred with the Government's position on the conflict. On the other hand, unauthorised public processions could result in public order, and safety and security concerns, and will not be allowed regardless of the cause, or which side the support is for.

8. We would like to urge members of the public not to engage in activities that will damage the peace, public order and social harmony which Singaporeans have worked hard to achieve, and enjoy today. We should not deliberately break the law, even if to make a point. If we do so, eventually, we will become a lawless, unstable, and disorderly society.

9. The Government takes a serious view of the deliberate communication of falsehoods. The Minister for Home Affairs has instructed the POFMA Office to issue a Correction Direction¹ to the SDP; and for a Targeted Correction Direction² to be issued to TikTok Pte Ltd. SDP will be required to carry correction notices alongside its Facebook and Instagram posts, and create a new TikTok post containing a correction notice. TikTok will also be required to communicate a correction notice to all end-users in Singapore that had accessed the TikTok post.

10. For the facts of the case, please refer to the Factually article "Corrections regarding false statements by Singapore Democratic Party on the charges brought against 3 women for alleged involvement in organising a procession to the Istana" <<http://www.gov.sg/article/factually290624>>.

MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS
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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.

² A Targeted Correction Direction is a Direction issued to an Internet Intermediary ("II") whose service was used to communicate a falsehood that affects the public interest. The Direction requires the II to communicate a correction notice by means of its service to all users in Singapore who access the falsehood through its service. This is so that users who see the falsehood on a platform also see the correction notice on that platform.