



PRESS RELEASE

ISSUANCE OF CORRECTION DIRECTION UNDER THE PROTECTION FROM ONLINE FALSEHOODS AND MANIPULATION ACT ON FALSEHOODS ON ETHNIC INTEGRATION POLICY

The video posted by Mr Shaik Amar on his TikTok and Instagram accounts on 24 July 2024, and on his YouTube account on 25 July 2024, contains false and misleading statements regarding the Ethnic Integration Policy (EIP).

2 The Minister for National Development has instructed the POFMA Office to issue a Correction Direction to Mr Shaik Amar in relation to this video.

3 The video is misleading in a number of ways. The POFMA Direction is being issued for the following two false statements of fact:

- a. That the EIP offers no benefit to ethnic minority households; instead, it only causes them significant financial detriment when they sell their flats.
- b. The EIP was introduced in the 1960s and has not been changed to date.

Benefits and Relevance of EIP Today

4 Mr Shaik Amar's assertion that the EIP does not benefit ethnic minority households and only causes them significant financial detriment when they sell their flats is **false**.

5 The EIP was introduced to prevent racial enclaves and ensure racial diversity in HDB neighbourhoods, in support of racial harmony. **The EIP benefits minorities in several ways.**

6 Because of the EIP, HDB ensures that a defined proportion of flats are set aside for ethnic minority communities ("Minority Communities") in all HDB neighbourhoods through its Build-To-Order (BTO) and Sale of Balance Flats (SBF) exercises, and through open booking of flats. This is a significant benefit because the EIP **guarantees** that a specified minimum number of flats in HDB estates, **including in highly sought after estates**, are available for persons from Minority Communities. Flats in these areas are generally higher priced. But the significant Government subsidies given by HDB make them affordable.

7 Without the EIP, there will be a significant risk that the proportion of owners from Minority Communities in much sought-after areas will be much less, even at point

of sale by HDB. The EIP, in this way, generally enables more persons from the Minority Communities to benefit when the flats are sold.

8 Mr Shaik Amar himself benefited from the EIP, because his household would not have been able to select an SBF flat if there was no EIP. During the SBF exercise where his household had booked their SkyOasis @ Dawson flat, all minority First-Timer applicants were invited to select a 3-room flat in Queenstown, including Mr Shaik Amar's household. In comparison, only about 40% of Chinese First-Timer applicants were invited to select a flat because of the Chinese EIP limit. The value of flats in SkyOasis @ Dawson have now appreciated significantly. In this way the Government ensures the Minority Communities are also able to benefit from the increase in value that takes place when a flat bought from HDB is resold at a higher price.

9 It is misleading to focus on the point of **resale**, without setting out that the flat was **obtained in the first place within the framework of the EIP**.

10 As stated earlier, the EIP is applied at BTO, SBF, as well as open booking of flats in all estates. For the same reason, the EIP is also applied at point of resale of such flats.

11 This ensures that persons from Minority Communities continue to own HDB flats in different estates, including highly sought after housing estates. Without the EIP, over time, there will be fewer persons from Minority Communities owning flats in highly sought after housing estates. That will be detrimental to Minority Communities in several ways.

12 First, it will reduce the likelihood that there will be future owners from Minority Communities in such estates – and they would not be able to benefit from future increases in value. Second, segregation generally affects Minority Communities more than it affects a Majority Community, in this case the Chinese. The effects of such segregation are bad and can be seen in many countries all over the world.

13 The EIP was introduced in 1989 (and not the 1960s) to counteract the worrying trend of ethnic enclaves forming in certain HDB estates. Before the EIP, there were neighbourhoods where there was a significant concentration of minorities, and there were neighbourhoods where the Chinese formed more than 90%. The EIP was implemented to deal with this issue early. By setting limits on the proportion of each ethnic group allowed in a HDB block or neighbourhood, it has been possible to have ethnically diverse neighbourhoods across Singapore, and opportunities for interaction and understanding across races.

14 The EIP remains relevant today. Nearly one in three HDB blocks, and 11% of HDB neighbourhoods, have reached their EIP limits. Without the EIP, ethnic concentrations will increase. This happens in many places around the world. Without diversity in our HDB estates where the majority of Singaporeans live, opportunities for multicultural interactions will be reduced, and this will ultimately change the tone and complexion of our society. This is one of the ways in which the EIP benefits **all Singaporeans**, including the Minority Communities.

15 The racial harmony we enjoy in Singapore is the result of several carefully thought through policies. The EIP is one of them. Every week, there are hundreds of community and grassroots activities conducted all over Singapore. Residents of all ethnicities come together, and take part in these activities. This helps in building bonds between our people of different ethnicities. It builds up greater understanding and acceptance of each other. All of this would be reduced substantially if our housing estates were segregated.

Measures to Assist EIP-Constrained Flat Owners

16 It is false that all minority households suffer significant financial detriment when they sell their flats. The Government accepts and has publicly acknowledged that for some EIP-constrained flat owners, at point of resale, there can be differences in the prices that a potential Chinese buyer might be willing to pay, compared with a potential buyer from the Minority Communities.

17 Over the years, HDB has put in place a range of measures to assist these EIP-constrained flat owners, including giving EIP-constrained flat owners more time to sell their existing flat if they have purchased another one, and waiving the EIP limits in exceptional circumstances.

18 Further, in 2022, HDB implemented the EIP Buyback Assistance Scheme. As stated above, Mr Shaik Amar's statement that the policy had not been changed since 1960s is false. This Buyback Assistance Scheme provides flat owners who are genuinely constrained by EIP limits with the fallback option of selling their flats to HDB at a fair price, based on prevailing market conditions. Households will need to have owned their flats for at least ten years and the flats should have been marketed at reasonable prices for at least six months. Those with extenuating circumstances can appeal to HDB for special consideration to waive these conditions. In assessing whether households qualify for assistance, HDB will consider their specific circumstances, such as the duration that they have been EIP-constrained for, and whether they have marketed their flats consistently at reasonable prices.

19 The flats bought back by HDB will be offered for sale through SBF exercises or open booking of flats. As with all flats sold through these modes, HDB will give a **significant subsidy to the assessed market value of the flat** to determine the sale price. Where Chinese EIP limits are reached, only buyers from the Minority Communities will be eligible to buy such flats, and they will benefit from the subsidies, like other buyers.

20 Ultimately, the EIP has ensured that no HDB neighbourhood in Singapore is exclusive to any single ethnic group and has thus achieved very real benefits for the Minority Communities.

Factual Clarifications

21 Mr Shaik Amar will be required to carry correction notices on his TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube accounts. These notices will state that the video posted on 24 July 2024 (on TikTok/Instagram) and 25 July 2024 (on YouTube) contains false and misleading statements, and will provide a link to the Government's clarification.

This will allow viewers to consider both versions and draw their own conclusions. While Mr Shaik Amar has taken down the videos on TikTok and Instagram, there is a need to address the falsehoods that may have been circulating amongst the public as a result of the publication of these videos. We note that the video remains on his YouTube account.

22 For the facts of the case, please refer to the Factually article “Corrections regarding falsehoods on Ethnic Integration Policy.” at URL: <https://www.gov.sg/article/factually010824>.

Issued by: Ministry of National Development

Date: 1 August 2024