



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Issuance of POFMA Correction Direction to The Online Citizen for False Statements Concerning the Death Penalty in Singapore**

1. The Ministry of Home Affairs (“MHA”) is aware of the following publications that communicate false statements concerning the death penalty in Singapore:
  - a. The Online Citizen’s (TOC’s) article published on its website on 22 November 2024 (“TOC’s article”); and
  - b. TOC’s Facebook, Instagram, and X posts on 22 November 2024.
2. The Minister for Digital Development and Information and Second Minister for Home Affairs has instructed the Protection from Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Act (POFMA) Office to issue a POFMA Correction Direction in respect of the above publications. The Correction Direction will require TOC to insert a correction notice against each publication, with a link to the Government’s clarification.
3. TOC’s article (which was shared on its social media posts) alleges that the State suppresses dissenting views on the death penalty through POFMA Correction Directions. This is false.
4. The State only issues POFMA Directions if a false statement of fact has been communicated, and if it is in the public interest to do so. A POFMA Correction Direction does not require the recipient to adopt the Government’s position, or to remove the original post. It only requires the Government’s position to be carried alongside the original post, so that readers can read the post containing the falsehoods, together with the official clarifications, and come to their own conclusion. The State does not limit dissent, suppress alternative perspectives, stifle open debate or pressure dissenting voices to conform, as alleged by TOC.
5. TOC has also presented an incomplete and misleading version of what the Minister said during an interview with the CNN. The article omitted relevant facts and selectively quoted the Minister, to reach the position that the Minister took contradictory positions about Singapore’s drug policies. In particular, the author omitted to set out what the Minister had said in explaining Singapore’s success, and why there are ongoing challenges.
6. During the interview, the Minister spoke about the experience of other countries, and explained that Singapore has had relative success in controlling the drug situation over the longer term. In the 1990s, about 6,000 people were arrested annually for drug offences. Now, this number has fallen to about half, or about 3,000 people. At the same time,

Singapore was now richer, and the region was “literally swimming in drugs”. There was also a more permissive environment towards drugs. Singapore adhered to its zero-tolerance policy, including the capital punishment, because this approach saved more lives, kept Singapore safe, and contributed to our low crime rate. The Minister cited a survey in the region where our drug traffickers largely come from, where more than 80% of respondents said that the death penalty was more effective in deterring serious crimes, such as drug trafficking. As a result of the death penalty, they did not want to traffic drugs into Singapore.

7. In context, it would be clear from the Minister’s statements that Singapore’s success must be understood in relative terms, and that without Singapore’s zero-tolerance and comprehensive drug policy, including the death penalty, the drug situation in Singapore would be much worse.
8. The Minister also emphasised that it was a challenging environment, and that it must be a “continuous fight”. Singapore must continue to deal with its challenges, including the proliferation of drugs in the region and a more permissive environment.
9. The full context of what the Minister said had not been set out by the article. It is misleading (and hence false) for the author to omit relevant facts, and selectively quote the Minister, to reach the position that the Minister had taken contradictory positions about Singapore’s anti-drug policies.
10. The full transcript of the CNN interview may be found here: <https://www.mha.gov.sg/mediaroom/speeches/transcript-of-cnn-interview-with-mr-k-shanmugam-minister-for-home-affairs-and-minister-for-law-on-7-november-2024>
11. The Minister’s responses in the CNN interview must also be seen in the wider context of all the other publicly available statements and information on Singapore’s drug policies and our success in controlling drugs, including the Ministerial Statement on Singapore’s National Drug Control Policy delivered on 8 May 2024, which can be found here: <https://www.mha.gov.sg/mediaroom/parliamentary/ministerial-statement-on-singapore-national-drug-control-policy>
12. For the facts of the case, please refer to the Factly article “Corrections regarding false statements by The Online Citizen concerning the death penalty in Singapore” at [www.gov.sg/article/factly161224](http://www.gov.sg/article/factly161224).

**MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS**  
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