

Annex D: Examples of the Politicisation of Race and Religion in Past General Elections

Attempts directed at the Chinese Community

1. Prior to the 1997 GE, a Workers' Party (WP) candidate claimed that the rights of other races in Singapore had been prioritised over the Chinese. He said that English-speaking Christians in the Cabinet and civil service leadership did not serve the interests of the Chinese speaking and non-Christian majority. At a seminar to a largely Chinese-educated audience, he demanded: "Why then are we the ones carrying the sedan chair? We should be the ones sitting on the sedan chair!" During the 1997 GE, he again brought up racial issues, insinuating that the ruling party had secured the Malay vote in exchange for building mosques.
2. In the 1976 GE, WP candidate Mr Ho Juan Thai made racially inflammatory speeches, which were meant to stir up extreme emotions on visceral issues of Chinese language, education and culture. Among other things, Ho said that the Government was out to "exterminate" Chinese education in Singapore, that the Government had gone all out to advocate the importance of English in order to "wipe out" the Chinese language, and that "killing" Chinese education was its achievement.

Attempts directed at the Malay Community

3. In the 1991 GE, WP candidate Mr Jufrie Mahmood attempted to stir up racial and religious sentiments in the Malay/Muslim community. He claimed that the Malays were marginalised in Singapore, and criticised the Government for introducing sex education in schools, removing religious teaching, and introducing full-day schools. He also criticised Mr Sidek Saniff, a Malay PAP candidate and Minister of State, for not speaking up against R-rated films, and for supporting the Maintenance of Religious Harmony Bill then. He claimed that Mr Saniff had "sold out" his principles in return for a promotion.