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MHA IN PARLIAMENT

Second and Third Reading of the Foreign Interference (Countermeasures) Bill

The Foreign Interference (Countermeasures) Bill was passed in Parliament today. The Bill will strengthen our ability to prevent, detect and disrupt foreign interference in our domestic politics conducted through hostile information campaigns and the use of local proxies.

- >> [Read the Second Reading Speech by MIN K Shanmugam](#)
- >> [Read the Second Reading Speech by MOS Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim](#)
- >> [Read the Second Reading Speech by MOS Desmond Tan](#)
- >> [Read the Wrap-up Speech by MIN K Shanmugam](#)

Understanding Foreign Interference (Countermeasures) Act (FICA)

FICA deals with attempts by foreign actors to manipulate our domestic politics and disrupt social cohesion. Our politics are for Singaporeans to decide and foreigners should not be allowed to interfere.

Let's clear up some misunderstanding about the Bill.

Will FICA restrict Singaporeans from discussing politics?

- Singaporeans have the right to express their own views about politics. FICA does not prohibit this.



Does this mean foreigners and foreign publications cannot write about Singapore's affairs?

- Foreign individuals or publications can report or comment on Singapore politics in an open, and transparent manner.



Why is FICA tabled in Parliament within a short time, with no public discussion?

- Foreign interference has been discussed extensively in recent years, during the Select Committee on Deliberate Online Falsehoods, in Parliament, and in the media. There were also consultations with major internet companies and platforms.



Why is FICA worded broadly?

- There are clear conditions to be met, before FICA can be used. FICA must be able to deal effectively with an evolving and wide range of foreign interference tactics.





Exchange Between Speaker of Parliament Mr Tan Chuan-Jin, MIN K Shanmugam and Member of Parliament Ms Raeesah Khan

MIN K Shanmugam gave a Ministerial Statement to address MP Raeesah Khan’s allegation of SPF mishandling a sexual assault case.

Minister: Mr Speaker Sir, I had given Mr Speaker notice that I want to make a short Ministerial Statement. This relates to something that was said in the Parliamentary sitting on the 3rd of August 2021, this year by one of the Members of Parliament, Ms Khan, at the WP’s Motion on Empowering Women.

Ms Khan had said that three years ago, she had accompanied a 25-year-old survivor to file a police report against a rape, and that she saw the survivor coming out crying. The survivor told her that the Police officer had made comments about her dressing, and the fact that she had been drinking. Ms Khan also shared her experience with this House about going with the victim to the Police, what she saw after she had filed a report, and she cited it as an example of how law enforcement needs to ensure better treatment of sexual assault survivors.

My colleague, MOS Desmond, then asked for more details about the incident, so that the government can investigate what happened. He explained that MHA takes these allegations very seriously, and said that they had to be looked into, to check if the case had been handled properly by the Police, and they should not be swept aside without further investigations.

Ms Khan’s response was that she had raised the example as it was her personal experience with a rape survivor. She also stated her belief that these anecdotes are not isolated and expressed the hope that such incidents could start further discussions about how victims are treated. She went on to say that the incident

able to identify a case where Ms Khan was present with a victim. It is entirely possible that they didn’t note down Ms Khan’s name, but it is most important that the matter is not left hanging with doubt over what may or may not have happened. And as I have said, our focus is on the Police officers, the reputation of the Singapore Police Force, to help the victim, and for us to find out what happened, and to try and make sure the Police officers understand better if indeed it happened in this way, and change their behavior if necessary, and for the message to go out to all Police officers.

So, Sir, through you, may I ask Ms Khan for those details?

Speaker: Ms Raeesah Khan, if you can furnish the details please, thank you.

MP Raeesah Khan: Thank you, Minister for the clarifications. Like I said, it did happen three years ago and I haven’t been successful getting in touch with the person that I accompanied. And, you know, with regards to confidentiality, I would prefer for it to remain that way. Thank you.

Minister: Sir, I asked which Police station, and which month, and the identities of the officers to the extent that Ms Khan knows them.

Speaker: Ms Khan, to facilitate the investigation by Police to check?

MP Raeesah Khan: Thank you. I do not know the identity of the Police officers.

happened three years ago, and she did not wish to re-traumatize the survivor, whom she had accompanied.

Later in the debate, Ms Khan rose again to further clarify that she raised the example because it was her experience with a survivor, and that the episode took place three years ago, and she had been unsuccessful in getting in touch with the victim. She said this in the context that, I quote, “consent is imperative, not least to avoid re-victimisation”.

We take such allegations concerning the Police very seriously. Ms Khan has said she didn't want the victim to be re-traumatized or re-victimized. I understand and empathize with that, and we will bear that in mind as we seek to investigate what happened, especially since the Member has raised this here in Parliament, to make sure that we know what happened, and if necessary, discipline the Police officers involved. This does not have to mean naming the victim. We will consider carefully how to protect the victim, and deal with this matter sensitively.

What is extremely important is that we identify the Police station, the Police officers involved. I have given very clear instructions to the Police that we have to identify the officers involved, get their versions, to be fair to them. And, what further steps are taken, depends on the facts. The government is very serious about making sure that the Police do the right thing. So, if they haven't behaved well, then we must discipline them. That means investigating what happened, identifying the officers involved. That's how we have maintained an excellent Home Team. As I've said, this does not have to mean that the victim has to be named publicly. We will consider carefully how to proceed, so as not to re-traumatize the victim. And, for us to take this further, we need more details.

So, can I ask the Member through you, Sir, to tell us at the very least, the Police station that she went to with the victim, and if possible, the names of the Police officer or officers who attended to the victim and the Member. And, if she cannot remember the names, then some details – how many officers were there, some description of them, rough age, race, male or female – whatever details she can give. And when the Member saw the victim come out crying after her interview, did the Member bring this to the Police officers' attention? What did the Member say to the officers? How did the officers respond when alerted to the victim's reaction? And did the Member lodge a complaint about what happened either at the time, or after that? I think the Member should be able to remember the month, the year when this happened, when she went to the Police station. She told Parliament that this happened. She told the Parliament three times that this happened three years ago. Can she confirm that this took place in 2018? I should add that, you know, since we take very seriously all these points, Police have spent a lot of time searching their records, since this point was made. They don't seem to be

Speaker: The questions on Police station, date, etc?

MP Raeesah Khan: With regards to confidentiality with the survivor, I would not like to reveal any of this information. Thank you.

Minister: We are talking about the Police station. It's got nothing to do confidentiality of the survivor.

Speaker: Ms Raeesah Khan, Minister is not asking about the identity of individual.

MP Raeesah Khan: I understand, but with regards to confidentiality, I will not be revealing that any other information. Thank you.

Minister: I have to say that, perhaps Mr Speaker has the power to direct answers, since the matter has been raised, and through you, Sir, I ask for a direction to be given, that we be told which Police station and the month – if not a date, at least a month – and which Police station.

Speaker: Ms Khan, I think that's a fair question. Would you like to respond, or are you holding to the same position? The reason is that certain allegations have been made, which I think are fair and serious, and the Police, I understand, would like to follow up to check to make sure that they can rectify the situation. So, any leads will be useful, without divulging the name of the lady concerned.

MP Raeesah Khan: Thank you, I still like for it to remain confidential. Thank you.

Minister: Sir, I don't understand this point about confidentiality. Can I ask through you, Sir, for Ms Khan to confirm in this House that everything she has told us is accurate, that she did accompany such a person, and such an incident did happen?

MP Raeesah Khan: Yes.

Minister: Sir, we have checked our records. We have no such case that fits in with the description that has been given by the Member. I wanted to give her the option of giving us the best information she has, that she confirms that such an incident happened, that she accompanied the victim to the Police station, and that she does not wish to divulge the information only because of confidentiality. Speaker and Members will know that confidentiality doesn't extend to not telling us which Police station.

And Sir, I will leave it here for now, but that does not mean the matter rests. The Police will investigate this very serious matter further. The officers in charge in the Police will interview Ms Khan, and any allegations of misconduct concerning specific officers will be referred to SPF's Internal Affairs Office for further investigation. Because I will say to Ms Khan, through you, Sir, that at the very least, she must remember which Police station, which year this happened in which month, and some details of the number and the ages and races of the Police officers who she says, and she has confirmed for us that she did see them. Thank you, Sir.

