

## **Written Representation 67**

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Retired

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Dear Sir

### **Select Committee On Fake News**

1. Why the complaint in my blog is not fake news and why the Select Committee on online fake news should classify it under one of the various categories of information disseminated to the public.

2. If you look at my two blogs, you will notice that there is no comment by Singaporeans except for some initial comments by foreigners at [complainproper.wordpress.com](http://complainproper.wordpress.com) and there is none at [an audience of three.blogspot.com](http://an audience of three.blogspot.com). The reason could be that they were afraid of being sued by the government or afraid of being targeted by people in government. In this regard two recent examples could be shown respectively. In the first, Mr Low Thia Kiang mentioned in Parliament the case of Tang Liang Hong who was sued for making a police report. Checking back on the news, Jeyaretnam was also sued when he referred to the police report at an election rally. In the second, the case of Amos Yee where an US immigration judge concluded there was "well-founded fear of future persecution in Singapore".

3. Similarly, news media would only refer to the complaint indirectly. My blog listed many such instances. The complaint was collusion between a neighbour and officers to carry on a trade in HDB flat and, after reporting to the police, the neighbourhood police did not conduct a full investigation. Should not the authorities give a reply when informed of the wrongdoing? The right to silence is to prevent self-incrimination, but should it apply to authorities when we talk about rule of law for the citizenry?

4. Who would argue against freedom of publication within limits in a democracy? If news media were to publish hearsay but wrote to the authority to confirm its validity, would it be considered fake news? As fake news, action can be taken against the publisher. If the onus is for me to prove wrongdoing before the authorities will take action, then because I provided no proof I could also be hauled up for writing fake news. However, my blog is not hearsay. I back up with evidence, but the authorities would not give a reply.

5. Why has the case been in suspension and why we need the authority to give a reply. Because the mainstream media and major news media sites have been restricted, very few Singaporeans know about my blogs. Even though the complaint has been over a course of five elections and one reserved presidency and there were indirect references, it could not affect election result. If the authorities were made to

give a reply, they would not very well say no public interest was involved. In these two aspects there is no transparency.

6. The Select Committee may avoid my questions. Fake news is headline news in US and Europe and the Select Committee could fine-tune what legislation they come up with. But lawmaking is peculiar to country. If my case was reported by major news media, the problem would have been resolved. As it is, officers still cause trouble. After my last posting in Sep 17 there was intention to cause trouble. When will the trouble be over? Considering that the authorities did not reply to me nor to the MPs when I asked for their assistance on issues raised, it is officers (people) on the ground who are in such strong position that the problem is kept unresolved at my expense.

7. We say our leaders are incorruptible, our civil service is the best in the world and our society is crime-free. In each we seem to have come up short. I blog unfairness, injustice and officers continue to cause trouble. And before that, I attended Meet-the-People Sessions (MPS) and later wrote letters to the authorities. If you can resolve my situation, what will you do?

8. First, active online news is participation in a democracy. Second, a vibrant community with clear line of communication (responsibility) to government will prevent my case from happening. Third, the technology can be made to transform society through self-education, better governance and better people to counter fake news.

9. The definition of what constitutes fake news is elusive. Fake news attempts to mislead and the seriousness depends on its purpose and scale of operation. I hope your recommendations will bring about openness and accountability on news media sites and in government. If the Select Committee can help resolve the complaint, then there will be cause for cheer.

10. An independent regulatory authority that monitors fake news could say my blog is probably not fake. They could also determine it to be fake for whatever reason and ask for the blog to be taken down. They could work with and persuade corporations and authorities in government. Being set up to be an independent body free from the influence of corporation and government, they could publicise and protect the weak. In this way, they gain trust for the works they do. Of course they could be sued, but they are reputable. Could such an authority help in the complaint? The reasons the complaint is unresolved over a long time is in Item 2 to Item 6 above.

11. I read *Ancient Chinese Thought, Modern Chinese Power* Yan Xuetong, the chapter *Pre-Qin Political Philosophy*, on pre-Qin thinkers. It is an analysis on political strength and shifts of international power that relates virtue and legal system to success or failure of government. In my blog there are numerous extracts from books and articles on moral and legal reasoning.

12. Mr Charles Chong, the Chairman of the Select Committee, was the first MP I wrote to and met at MPS with my complaint in '08. Mr Charles Chong, Mr Janil Puthuchery and Ms Sun Xueling of the Select Committee are MPs at Punggol East, Punggol Coast and Punggol West respectively. They are part of the enlarged Group Representation Constituency (GRC) headed by Mr Teo Chee Hean whom I had also wrote to and met at MPS about the complaint. After I sold my flat in Pasir Ris, I live in Punggol West.

Yours Sincerely,  
Ng Kok Hua