

FOURTEENTH PARLIAMENT OF SINGAPORE

First Session

FIFTH SPECIAL REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES

Parl. 10 of 2021

Presented to Parliament on

15 December 2021

COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES

Members

Mr Speaker (Mr Tan Chuan-Jin)
Chairman

Ms Grace Fu Hai Yien
Minister for Sustainability and the Environment

Mr Desmond Lee
Minister for National Development and Minister-in-charge of Social Services Integration

Ms Rahayu Mahzam
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Communications and Information and Ministry of Health

Mr Dennis Tan Lip Fong

Mr Edwin Tong Chun Fai
Minister for Culture, Community and Youth and Second Minister for Law

Mr Don Wee

Mr Zaqy Mohamad
Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Manpower and Deputy Leader of the House

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FIFTH SPECIAL REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES

The Committee of Privileges (the “**Committee**”) constituted under Standing Order 100(7)(a) has agreed to this Fifth Special Report under Standing Order 105(2):

1. On 15 December 2021, the Committee heard further oral evidence from Mr Pritam Singh.
2. The summary of oral evidence given on 15 December 2021 is set out at **Annex A**.
3. After hearing the above witness, the Committee resolved to make the entire video recording of the oral evidence available to Parliament and thereby to the public through the Parliament website.
4. The Committee had previously asked Mr Pritam Singh, Ms Sylvia Lim and Mr Muhamad Faisal Bin Abdul Manap to produce documents, including internal correspondence between senior leadership concerning issues raised in the Committee. These requests were first raised on various occasions from 10 December 2021 to 14 December 2021. However, Mr Pritam Singh, Ms Sylvia Lim and Mr Muhamad Faisal Bin Abdul Manap have failed and/or refused to provide them. As such, a summons was each issued to Mr Pritam Singh, Ms Sylvia Lim and Mr Muhamad Faisal Bin Abdul Manap on 15 December 2021. The Committee will consider Mr Pritam Singh’s, Ms Sylvia Lim’s and Mr Muhamad Faisal Bin Abdul Manap’s responses on the summons on Monday 20 December 2021.
5. The proceedings of the Committee have largely concluded save for a few outstanding matters which will be assessed and addressed by the Committee henceforth. The Committee will present its findings and recommendations to Parliament in due course.

Annex A

Summary of Key Points from Evidence given by Mr Pritam Singh on 15 Dec 2021

1. Mr Pritam Singh (“Mr Singh”) was recalled today by the Committee of Privileges (“COP”), because Ms Sylvia Lim (“Ms Lim”) had produced a document which she had recorded verbatim and contemporaneously, that Mr Singh had said to Ms Khan: “Before Oct session, I met you + I told you it was your call.”. Mr Singh was therefore given the opportunity to clarify his evidence.
2. The key points from Mr Singh’s evidence today are summarised below.
3. Ms Lim had submitted to the COP, notes which she had taken, during the Workers’ Party (“WP”) Disciplinary Panel (“DP”) interview with Ms Khan on 29 Nov. It set out an exchange between Mr Singh and Ms Khan:

[Taken from Ms Lim’s handwritten notes of the DP interview on 29 Nov]

PS: Before Oct session, I met you + I told you it was your call.

Did need to tell the truth in Parl occur to you?

RK: Yes but consumed with guilt + own experience.

Thought it wouldn’t come up.

PS: Can’t lie right?

RK: Yes.

4. Mr Singh was told that there were two issues that arose as a result of Ms Lim’s notes: first, what Mr Singh had told Ms Khan on 3 Oct, and second, what Ms Khan should do, and what he expected her to do, if the matter arose.
5. Mr Singh confirmed that Ms Lim’s notes accurately reflected what he had said to Ms Khan during the DP hearing on 29 Nov. Mr Singh agreed that the phrase “your call” might be understood that he had on 3 Oct, told Ms Khan that she had to make a choice as to whether to tell the truth or continue to lie, if she was asked on 4 Oct.
6. However, Mr Singh said that what he had meant when he said “your call” was not this ordinary meaning, but that Ms Khan should take responsibility for her work in Parliament. He said that what he told Ms Khan at the DP meeting on 29 Nov had to be looked at in

context. Mr Singh also said that even though he had, on 29 Nov, used the language “It is your call to make”, to describe what he had told Ms Khan on 3 Oct, those were not the words he had in fact used to Ms Khan on 3 Oct, and the words he used did not offer Ms Khan a choice. Mr Singh also said that Ms Lim’s notes also reflected that he had told Ms Khan at the 29 Nov meeting, that she could not tell a lie (which was not said on 3 Oct).

7. Mr Singh was also referred to Ms Lim’s evidence. She had also said that Mr Singh’s words (“its your call”) indicated that it was for Ms Khan to decide, whether to tell the truth or continue the lie, on 4 Oct. Mr Singh said that when one informs an MP that he or she has to take ownership and responsibility, that MP has to take ownership and responsibility and in that context, the words “your call” give the suggestion that it is a choice for that MP to make. Mr Singh agreed that it was reasonable to construe the words “your call” to mean that it was a choice for Ms Khan to make. Mr Singh agreed that based on Ms Lim’s notes of the 29 Nov DP meeting, it appeared that he had given Ms Khan a choice.
8. Mr Singh was also referred to another part of Ms Lim’s evidence to the COP, in which Ms Lim had said that it was not fathomable to her that Mr Singh would have given Ms Khan a choice, between whether to tell the truth or continue with the lie.
9. Mr Singh agreed that the way in which he had characterised to the COP his 3 Oct meeting with Ms Khan, and his state of mind after that meeting, was quite different from the words “your call” in Ms Lim’s notes from 29 Nov.
10. Mr Singh was also asked why he had not said to Ms Khan on 3 Oct, “You must own up, tell the truth in Parliament”, and why he had not made things absolutely clear, in direct terms to Ms Khan. This was particularly given that she was a new MP, only one year into Parliament, and had admitted to telling a lie in Parliament, just two months prior to that. Mr Singh said that he believed he had communicated this message to Ms Khan in his own way, when he suggested to her on 3 Oct to take ownership and responsibility.
11. Mr Singh was also referred to Ms Loh Pei Ying’s evidence to the COP, as to how Mr Singh had recounted to her, his meeting on 3 Oct with Ms Khan. Mr Singh agreed that Ms Loh’s takeaway from her conversation with Mr Singh, was that Mr Singh had, on 3 Oct, given Ms Khan a choice whether to tell the truth or continue the lie.

Annex B

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

11th Meeting

Wednesday, 15 December 2021

1.00 pm

PRESENT

Mr Speaker (Mr Tan Chuan-Jin) (*in the Chair*)
Ms Grace Fu Hai Yien
Mr Desmond Lee
Ms Rahayu Mahzam
Mr Dennis Tan Lip Fong
Mr Edwin Tong Chun Fai
Mr Don Wee
Mr Zaqy Mohamad

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1. The Committee deliberated.
 2. Mr Pritam Singh was further examined.
 3. Ordered, that Mr Pritam Singh, Ms Sylvia Lim and Mr Muhamad Faisal Bin Abdul Manap be summoned to appear before the Committee and produce documents on Monday, 20 December 2021.
 4. Question put, “That the video recordings of the oral evidence of Mr Pritam Singh, Member for Aljunied GRC, be made available to Parliament and published on the Parliament website.”.

The Committee divided.

Ayes, 6
Tan Chuan-Jin
Grace Fu Hai Yien
Rahayu Mahzam
Edwin Tong Chun Fai
Don Wee
Zaqy Mohamad

Noes, 1
Dennis Tan Lip Fong

Resolved, "That the video recordings of the oral evidence of Mr Pritam Singh, Member for Aljunied GRC, be made available to Parliament and published on the Parliament website."

5. Question put, "That the Chairman's Fifth Special Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph."

The Committee divided.

Ayes, 6

Tan Chuan-Jin

Grace Fu Hai Yien

Rahayu Mahzam

Edwin Tong Chun Fai

Don Wee

Zaqy Mohamad

Noes, 1

Dennis Tan Lip Fong

Resolved, "That the Chairman's Fifth Special Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph."

6. Question put, "That paragraphs 1 to 5 inclusive stand part of the Fifth Special Report."

The Committee divided.

Ayes, 6

Tan Chuan-Jin

Grace Fu Hai Yien

Rahayu Mahzam

Edwin Tong Chun Fai

Don Wee

Zaqy Mohamad

Noes, 1

Dennis Tan Lip Fong

Resolved, "That paragraphs 1 to 5 inclusive stand part of the Fifth Special Report."

7. Question put, "That this report be the Fifth Special Report of the Committee to Parliament."

The Committee divided.

Ayes, 6

Tan Chuan-Jin

Grace Fu Hai Yien

Rahayu Mahzam

Edwin Tong Chun Fai

Don Wee

Zaqy Mohamad

Noes, 1

Dennis Tan Lip Fong

Resolved, "That this report be the Fifth Special Report of the Committee to Parliament."

8. *Agreed*, that the Chairman do present the Fifth Special Report to Parliament today.

Adjourned to Monday, 20 December 2021
