

15 March 2020

ADPAN condemns Singapore's use of police harassment in curbing public scrutiny of the judiciary and discussions of court cases

The Anti-Death Penalty Asia Network (ADPAN) stands in solidarity with Singapore's human rights lawyer Mr M Ravi, the Chief Editor of *The Online Citizen* (TOC) Mr Terry Xu, TOC writer Ms Danisha Hakeem and Mr Mohan Rajangam, all of who are currently under investigation for possible contempt of Court under Section 3(1)(b) of the state's Administration of Justice (Protection) Act.

It was reported in media articles that police, acting under the authorisation of the Attorney-General, raided the office of Mr Ravi and the home of Mr Xu, seizing their mobile devices and computers. Mr Xu was held at Cantonment Police Station for questioning by the Criminal Investigation Division (CID) for about 7 hours on Friday 13 March 2020.

It appears that the investigation commenced after some articles were published by *The Online Citizen* questioning the role of the Singapore State Court in Mr Mohan's extradition to Malaysia. It has been reported that Mr Mohan was arrested on 21 March 2015 and extradited to Malaysia following the endorsement of a Malaysian arrest warrant by a magistrate in Singapore, for an offence that he maintains he did not commit. He reportedly spent four months in custody before being released by Malaysian authorities without charge.

ADPAN holds strong to the view that public institutions must be transparent in order to be accountable, including being open to scrutiny and review. Public questioning or discussion regarding court cases ought not automatically be considered 'prejudicing or interfering' with court proceedings. Judicial officers have a duty to act independently from pressure from the public, media or the Executive.

The use of police powers that have the effect of unduly harassing individuals who publicly express their opinions or discusses such matters, including the seizure of mobile devices and computers and extended police questioning send the wrong message to the public in the exercise of legitimate dissent on government policies and actions. Rather, we strongly recommend the use of public platforms for the Government or institutions to clarify matters that impact on society including outcomes arising from the country's justice system.

For more information:

State Court loses notes of evidence in regards to the transfer of Mohan Rajangam to Malaysian authorities – <https://www.theonlinecitizen.com/2020/03/04/state-court-loses-notes-of-evidence-in-regards-to-transfer-of-mohan-rajangam-to-malaysian-authorities/>

TOC editor, lawyer M Ravi among 4 investigated for contempt of court – https://www.todayonline.com/singapore/toc-editor-lawyer-m-ravi-among-4-investigated-contempt-court?fbclid=IwAR1hhF8SjHFlbe_wKAXSOxCKkubhKsxVIJAdoQ6Y0Kq0NL8i3fAAViYybHI

TOC editor and lawyer being investigated for prejudicing ongoing court proceedings – <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/courts-crime/toc-editor-and-lawyer-being-investigated-for-prejudicing-ongoing-court>