

## **COOLING-OFF DAY BREACHES**

Press statement jointly issued by the Elections Department (ELD) and the Singapore Police Force (Police) in response to media queries:

1 The rules relating to Cooling-Off Day have been in place since 2011. In the various elections since GE2011 right up to GE2015, there have been some breaches of the Cooling-Off Day rules. The approach that has been taken has been to give warnings in respect of these breaches. In some of the cases, the breaches were found to be unintentional.

2 Despite the fact that the rules relating to Cooling-Off Day had been publicised several times, and reports of past breaches had also been made public, we observed what appeared to be deliberate and serious breaches of the rules under the Parliamentary Elections Act (PEA) during the 2016 Bukit Batok By-Election. These breaches took place inspite of the advisory that the ELD issued prior to Cooling-Off Day, and a subsequent reminder on Cooling-Off Day against such activities.

3 Various persons and sites published online posts in contravention of the PEA. For example, The Independent Singapore continued to post such material even after receiving a specific reminder from the Assistant Returning Officer not to do so. Given the blatant disregard of the PEA in the 2016 Bukit Batok By-Election, the Assistant Returning Officer decided to make police reports so that the Police could investigate.

4 The Police are currently conducting their investigations. As part of the investigations, the Police need to examine for evidentiary purposes electronic devices used to publish the online postings. As such, these devices had to be seized. Upon the completion of their investigations, the Police will address the Attorney-General's Chambers with their recommendations.

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