

**8 May 2024**

Written Reply to Parliamentary Question on Whether the Existing Electoral Rules Provide Recourse for Candidates and Political Parties Who Are the Subject of Manipulated, Deepfake Media or Fake News

**Question:**

**Ms He Ting Ru:** To ask the Prime Minister whether the existing electoral rules provide recourse for candidates and political parties who are the subject of manipulated, deepfake media or fake news released during the Cooling Off Day or Polling Day of national elections.

**Written Reply by Mr Chan Chun Sing, Minister of Education, for the Prime Minister:**

The Government takes a strong stance against malicious manipulated media content and online falsehoods. If such content is published online and is against the public interest, action may be taken under the Protection from Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Act (POFMA) to issue corrections, and require the correct facts to be published. Disabling directions can be issued if the content poses serious harm. Individuals may also be liable for offences under POFMA if they are found to have knowingly communicated online falsehoods.

2 During an election period, candidates and political parties who are the subject of manipulated media content or online falsehoods published during the campaigning period should publicly clarify the matter if the content is false. If candidates or political parties believe that a criminal offence has been committed, they may report it to the Police. Candidates may also consider legal recourse under the Protection from Harassment Act. If the content is circulating on social media, candidates and political parties may also report the content to social media platforms, many of which have established community guidelines prohibiting misinformation and / or misleading manipulated media.

3 On Cooling-off Day and Polling Day, the ban on publishing online election advertising will be in place. The Returning Officer can issue Corrective Directions to take down any online election advertising published during this period, including those which include manipulated media content or misinformation. Candidates and political parties are not precluded during this period from debunking false content as long as their clarifications do not constitute online election advertising.