

SPEECH BY MR TEO CHEE HEAN, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, COORDINATING MINISTER FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AND MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS, AT PARLIAMENT SITTING, 14 FEBRUARY 2012, 2:46 PM AT PARLIAMENT

**Question:**

Ms Sylvia Lim: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs (a) what channels are available for uniformed officers to furnish information about improper conduct of superior officers; (b) how many times have these channels been used in the last five years against superiors, what was the nature of the information given and what was the outcome of such reporting; (c) what repercussions will an officer face for giving information about a superior which is not substantiated or proven; and (d) whether reporting of superiors is hampered by the strict hierarchy of ranks within the uniformed services.

**Answer:**

Ms Sylvia Lim asked about the channels available for uniformed officers to report improper conduct of superior officers.

2 The Home Team has a reporting framework in place, which provides a confidential channel for officers to report any wrongful behaviour of officers.

3 Under this reporting framework, the usual channel for a uniformed MHA officer to raise concerns and feedback, is to do so in person or in writing, to designated persons within the officer's Home Team Department. The designated persons in the Home Team Departments are typically the Head of the Department or the Deputy Head of the Department.

4 If however, officers prefer to raise their concerns to a channel outside their Department, they can furnish the information to the Deputy Secretary or the Senior Director, Human Resource in the Ministry Headquarters. The identity of the reporting officer will be kept

confidential. This approach ensures that the reporting of any instance of improper conduct of a superior officer is not hampered by the hierarchy of ranks within the uniformed services. The above confidential reporting framework is communicated to our officers, and is contained in the Code of Conduct guide book issued to every officer.

5 The key principle of our reporting policy is that reports should be made in good faith. If a report is made in good faith, but a case of wrongdoing cannot be established after investigation, no action will be taken against the reporting officer. If, however, an allegation is made frivolously, maliciously or proven to be falsified, disciplinary action may be taken against the officer.

6 In the last 5 years, there were 59 cases reported. 44 of these cases were anonymous, so, we are not able to ascertain if they were from subordinates or peers. Of the 15 which were not anonymous, 8 were against a superior officer. Wrongful practices reported include allegations of failure to comply with procedures, and improper conduct or unethical behaviour. After investigation, errant officers will be dealt with in accordance with established disciplinary procedures.

7 We expect our officers to report a wrongdoing if they have sufficient grounds to believe that it has been committed, even if the report is against a superior officer. This framework ensures that the highest standards of conduct will be upheld in the organisation.