

**MEDIA STATEMENT  
27 APRIL 2013**

**AGC STATEMENT ON MAINTAINING RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS HARMONY AND  
JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE**

1. The Attorney-General's Chambers is aware of interest in the investigations into Mr Leslie Chew.
2. Mr Leslie Chew is assisting the Police in investigations at this time, and it will not be appropriate to comment specifically on his matter.
3. There have also been queries on the general principles as to when investigations would be conducted, and action taken against persons.
4. Every day, there are hundreds of commentaries, if not more, on socio-political matters both in the mainstream media and online. Many of these do not contravene the law, and no legal action will be taken by the Attorney-General's Chambers on behalf of the State, even though some may contain factual inaccuracies. Some of these statements may defame or otherwise cause damage to an individual; whether any action is to be taken is generally a matter for that individual.
5. However, racial and religious harmony is vital to our society and has enabled Singaporeans to live together in peace over the years. Words or deeds touching on race or religion have the potential to create fault lines within our society. Such bonds, once frayed, let alone sundered, cannot easily be repaired and we must therefore remain vigilant against any threats to racial and religious harmony.
6. Where statements are made, or actions are taken, which insult a particular religion or race, or seek to engender hatred amongst races or religious groups, or which suggest that the Government is using race or religion for its own purposes, then a response will follow. Where the statements or actions are heinous, a firm line will be taken. For example, the burning of the Koran or the Bible will not be allowed in Singapore under the cover of freedom of speech or expression. On the other hand where comments are made in the heat of the moment, or by relatively immature persons who did not know better, a more nuanced response may follow. Much will depend on what is uncovered by investigations.
7. Similarly, the rule of law is another fundamental tenet of our society and action will be taken in respect of any statement or action that seeks to impugn or undermine the independence of the Judiciary. Unwarranted allegations of bias or partiality strike at the heart of the judicial process, threatening the very institution that protects the rights of all Singaporeans. Such unfounded statements cannot be left to stand unchallenged and unpunished.