



Mr Terry Xu
Chief Editor
The Online Citizen

4 September 2019

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong
PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE
Orchard Road
Istana
Singapore 238823
REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE

Dear Sir

DEFAMATION

1. I refer to your letter to me dated 1 September 2019 (the “**Letter**”).
2. I have always been a firm believer in the values of accountability, transparency and the rule of law. I believe it is my role as the Chief Editor of The Online Citizen, Singapore’s longest running independent media outlet, to always speak truth to power.
3. Having reviewed the contents referred to, at paragraph 1 of the Letter (the “**Article**”), I am of the opinion that the contents of the Article are not defamatory. Instead, in light of the public statements that emanated from members of your own family, who, presumably, would have been privy to the events that the Article refers to, and the issues of public interest that arise, I believe that the contents of the article constitute fair comment. For the avoidance of doubt, I was merely republishing the words uttered by your siblings.
4. However, I am cognisant of the possibility that one reading the Article may be open to the misinterpretation of the timing of your removal as an executor and trustee of the will of Mr Lee Kuan Yew. It was not my intention to suggest that your removal as an executor in the will of Mr Lee Kuan Yew occurred after 2011. Neither did I intend to suggest that your removal as an executor and trustee of the will was a result of the issue of the gazetting of the 38 Oxley. I certainly recognise the possibility of the misinterpretation, which you have pointed out at paragraph 4 of your Letter. In that regard, I offer my apologies.
5. It must bear noting that the intent of the article was not to raise doubts or misunderstandings about the technicalities surrounding the allegations – in this case, the exact time at which you were removed as an executor and trustee of the late Mr Lee Kuan Yew’s will. Rather, the focus of the article was on the bigger picture relating to the allegations of abuse of power and the state of the relationship between the late Mr Lee Kuan Yew and his son. I solemnly and sincerely believe that it is this aspect, and not the technicalities that you take issue with, that concern many Singaporeans as it relates to the values of Mr Lee Kuan Yew.
6. Although I do fear that the cost stemming from the possible legal suit from you may be hefty, that is a price that I am willing to pay to not only uphold my principles, but also to uphold my obligations to Singapore and my fellow Singaporeans.

7. I stand guided by my love for Singapore and Singaporeans. It is my moral obligation to help dissipate the climate of fear that permeates discourse in Singapore to ensure a more open, vibrant and robust society for the future of Singapore.
8. Accordingly, I will not be complying with the demands set out at paragraph 8 of the Letter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several vertical strokes and a horizontal line, ending with a dot.

TERRY XU
Chief Editor
The Online Citizen