

Racial Harmony Day 2021



Official (Closed)

Recent race -related incidents

In recent months, we saw an increase in incidents of racial discrimination in Singapore. Police reports on such cases doubled from 31 to 60 in 2020. Here are some examples.

10 Jun 2021

Police investigating after woman filmed striking gong as neighbour carried out Hindu prayers at home

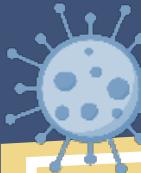


2 Jul 2021

Man arrested over racist remarks, attack on university student at East Coast Park

6 Jun 2021

Man makes racist remarks to interracial couple in viral video; Shanmugam says incident is 'very worrying'



7 Feb 2020

Religious teacher under investigation by MHA, Muis for post saying novel coronavirus was retribution from Allah against Chinese

10 May 2021

'Go back, bloody Indians,' says S'porean man to expat family at Pasir Ris Beach Park

25 May 2021

'You Indians don't follow the rules': Man allegedly insists woman's baby wear a mask at Bedok Reservoir

With **COVID-related misinformation on the rise**, there have been incidents of **prejudice and xenophobia** towards Chinese and Indian nationals in Singapore.

Responses to these incidents

Our leaders spoke out to condemn racism



Lee Hsien Loong

about 2 months ago



I am very disappointed and seriously concerned that this racist attack could happen in Singapore.

I understand people being under stress because of COVID-19, and anxious about their jobs and families. But that does not justify racist attitudes and actions, much less physically abusing and assaulting someone because she belongs to a particular race, in this case Indian. The victim happens to be a Singaporean, but even had she not been one the attack would still have been wrong... [See More](#)

“Lately, several worrying incidents have given us pause to consider the state of our racial harmony...**We cannot leave things as they are. We are better than this.**”

- Mr. Lawrence Wong, Minister for Finance

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Our institutions took swift action

17 Jun 2021

Ngee Ann Poly to sack lecturer in racist remark incident for serious misconduct

18 Jun 2021

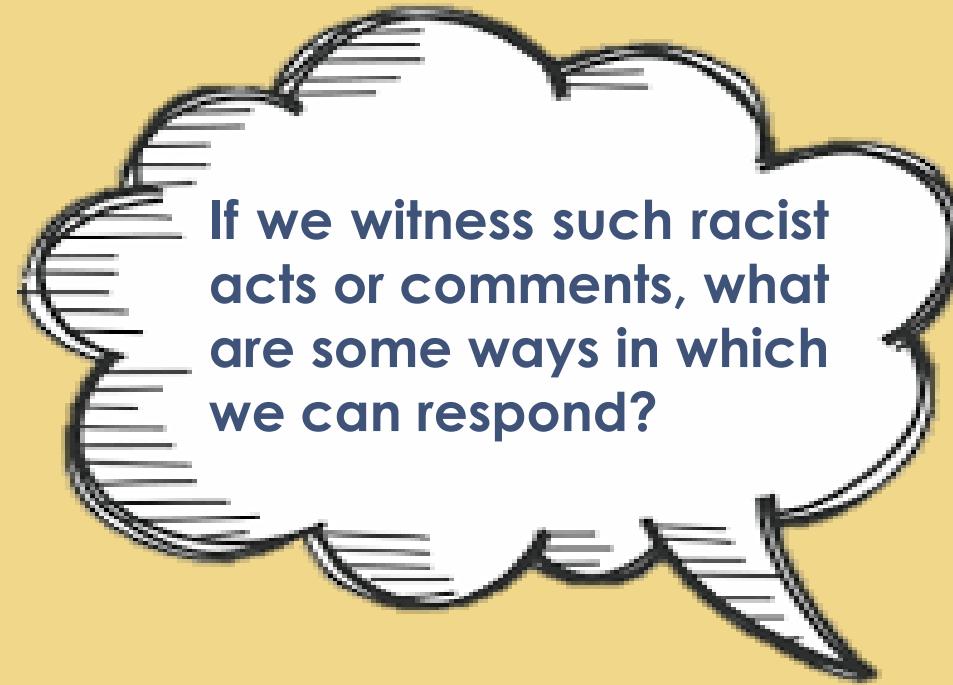
Woman who made comments about race charged with public nuisance, acting against racial harmony

23 Jun 2021

Woman who shouted racist abuse on bus jailed for 4 weeks

Sources: The Straits Times, TODAY, AsiaOne

What about you?



Racism may still exist in Singapore ...

2019 CNA-IPS Survey

About 40% of respondents said that their close friends were “at least mildly racist”.

Around 40% of Malay respondents felt that they had been treated negatively based on religion and income/education.

The majority of Indian respondents felt they had been treated negatively based on their race (67%) and skin colour (62%).



Source: CNA-IPS Survey on Race Relations (2019), based on a sample of 2,000 respondents

...but we have achieved much

2020 IPS Report on World Values Survey

Low level of perceived racism in Singapore compared to other multicultural societies.



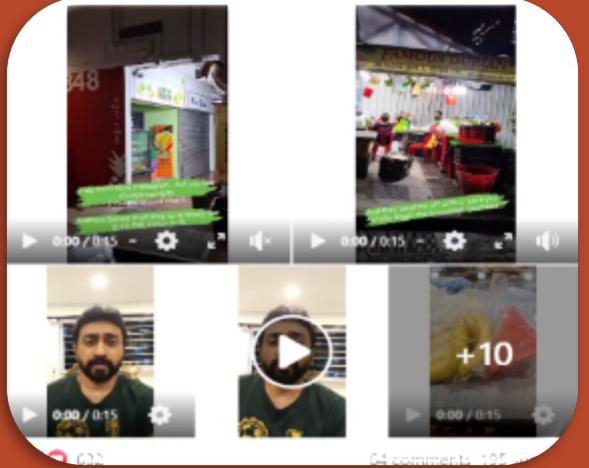
Among the respondents:

- 65.7% said that racism occurred “not at all frequently”.
- 28.7% said that racism occurred “not frequently”.

Only 5.7% of respondents said that racism “occurred frequently” in Singapore, compared to 23.5% in the US.

Source: IPS Report ‘Our Singaporean Values’ with findings from the World Values Survey (2020), based on a sample of 2,012 respondents

There are many acts of kindness, extended beyond racial lines.



← Indian Facebook user, Vishnu M. Anandh, shared his positive encounter with a Chinese fruit seller, Anthony Gan, who displayed generosity and graciousness when he did not have cash on him (2021).



← **Project Co-Knit with Love:** Singaporeans helped to knit mask extensions for Malay women who struggled with wearing and taking off their masks with their tudungs on (2020).



← Chinese lady showed small gesture of respect to Indian neighbour's Hindu deity (2021).



← Chinese lady gave Malay neighbour Hari Raya gifts and Ang Bao (2020).



← Malay father and son reciprocated by visiting the Chinese neighbour during Lunar New Year (2021).

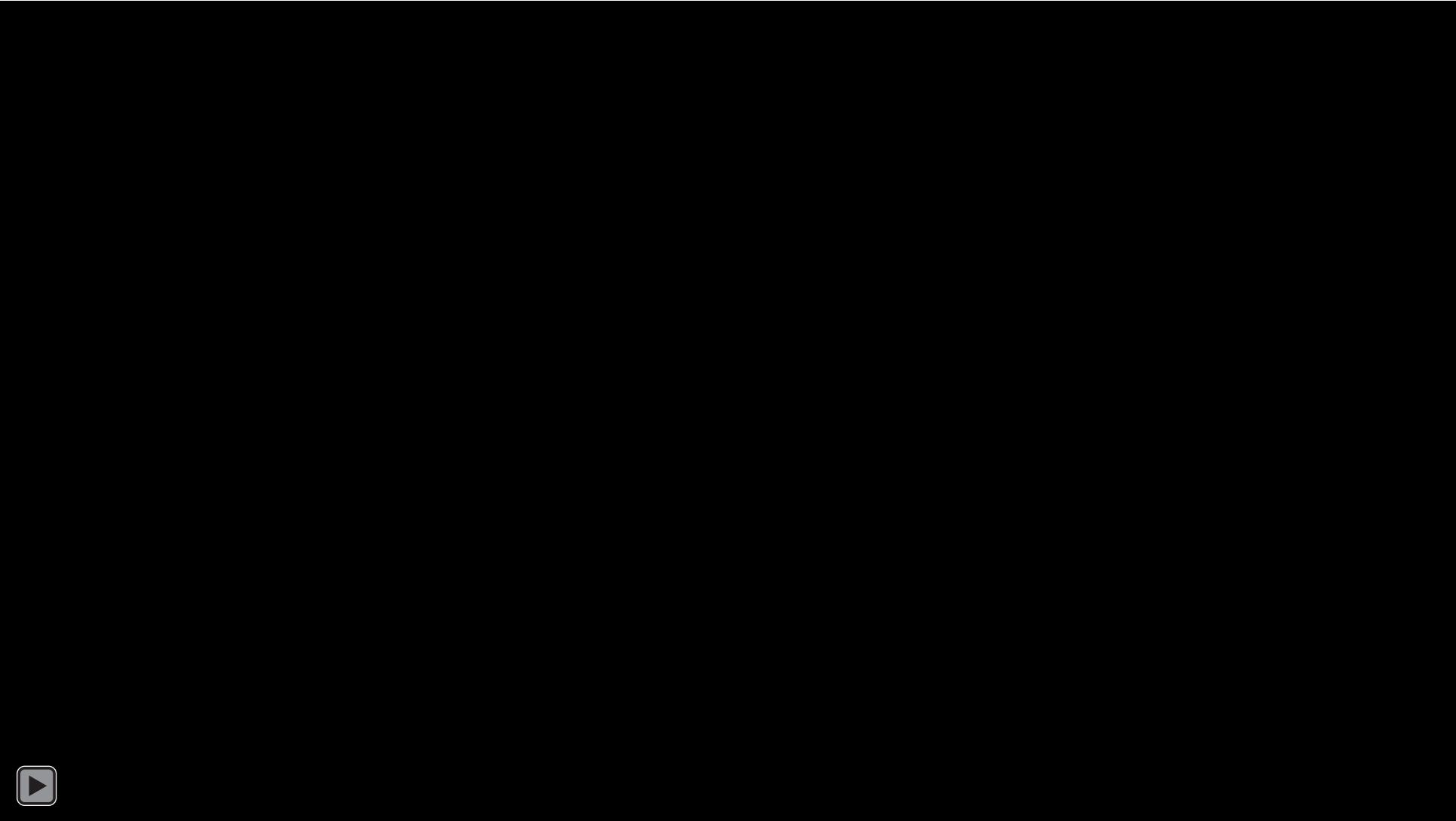
Building a multicultural society is one of our values

“ Here we make the model multi-racial society. This is not a country that belongs to any single community: it belongs to all of us. ”

– Mr. LeeKuanYew, 1965



*Our founding fathers fought for it,
so that all Singaporeans could live together
as equals, regardless of race or religion.*



Video: The Fight for Multiracialism (Produced by Nexus, 2017)

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Racial intolerance goes against our founding values

Having experienced periods of racial conflict, our **pioneer generation** hold a strong conviction about racial harmony



Over 200 pioneers were honoured at a tribute event in 2014 for their active role in **promoting racial and religious harmony as religious leaders**.

“I witnessed the 1964 riots, and I **don't want it to happen again**. Singaporeans need to know that **misunderstandings are caused by ignorance**. By understanding someone's religion and race, these things won't blow up.

– Mr. Lionel de Souza, Secretary of Hougang's Inter-Racial and Religious Confidence circle (IRCC), 2014
He is first from the right in the picture above

Our youths are countering hate through interfaith messages, ambassadorship and open discussions on racial and religious issues



Since 2012, youth-led interfaith initiative Roses of Peace (ROP) has engaged **over 3,000 youth volunteers** from diverse faiths, recorded **over 4,000 “Peace Pledges”** and distributed **over 50,000 roses with interfaith messages**.



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On 21 Feb every year, **21 peace ambassadors** are appointed to **build bridges between different communities** and inspire ongoing inter-racial and inter-religious initiatives on the ground.

Multiculturalism is **part of our unity**, and is **key to our strength and resilience** as a nation

“
Every one of us – parents, educators, individuals – play a part in safeguarding the treasured and hard-earned legacy of racial harmony.”

– Mr. Chan Chun Sing,
Minister for Education, 7 Jun 2021



“There is nothing natural about where we are – multiracial, multi-religious, tolerant and progressive. We made it happen, and we have got to protect it, nurture it, preserve it, and never break it.”

– Mr. Lee Hsien Loong,
Prime Minister, 2017

In the face of uncertainty, our **diversity** can be our **greatest strength**.

Race, and other differences, can polarise us and weaken our precious **unity**.



We must continue to **build strong bonds of trust, friendship, understanding**, and work hard to remain an inclusive society.

This is what keeps our Singapore spirit strong!

How can we better **protect multiracialism?**

Recognise that it is harder to be a minority than the majority.

Let's be sensitive towards the needs of the different communities.

Learn more about one another's culture.

So we can better understand one another, and build stronger bonds.



See one another as partners and work together.

Treat each other with mutual trust, accommodation and compromise.

We should speak out about racial prejudices, but do in a civil way.

Participate in constructive discussions on race and religion.

Voice out your concerns and suggestions, and work together to build common ground.

Let's live out our kampung spirit

“ To **live harmoniously** like in the kampung... there must be **understanding** and there must be **forgiveness**.

”



– Mr. C Kunalan, retired Singapore sprinter,
21 Jun 2021

And build “one united people, regardless of race, language or religion ”

“

Let us each be our brother's keeper, our sister's keeper and let us move forward with a spirit of mutual respect and fellowship. Educating each other about what matters to us, helping each other understand our different cultures, and finding the common stake we all have in one another. ”



– Mr Lawrence Wong, Minister for Finance
25 Jun 2021