

Annex C – Key Findings from MDDI Poll on Racial Harmony in Singapore

In collaboration with the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Digital Development and Information conducted a study on public sentiments towards racial harmony in Singapore and the proposed Maintenance of Racial Harmony Bill.

2. The poll was conducted from 19 August to 26 August 2024, with a sample of 1,051 Singapore Residents aged 15 years and older, and weighted to ensure representativeness by gender, age and race.

Key Findings

General perception towards racial harmony

3. More than half of the respondents felt that the current state of race relations in Singapore was good/very good. However, many also felt that racism remained a problem in Singapore.

- a. The majority of the respondents (54%) gave a positive rating of race relations in Singapore, 41% gave an average rating and with only 6% rating it as poor (figures do not add up to 100% due to rounding).
- b. 86% of the respondents felt that race relations in Singapore are better or the same as compared to 10 years ago, while a smaller proportion (14%) felt it is worse than 10 years ago. 46% agreed that race relations will continue to improve over the next 10 years, while 8% disagreed that it would. 45% held neutral views neither agreeing nor disagreeing that race relations will improve over the next 10 years.
- c. 43% felt that racism remains a problem in Singapore, with a smaller proportion (13%) disagreeing. 44% held a neutral view neither agreeing nor disagreeing that racism is a problem in Singapore. At least 35% of the respondents have had racially insensitive encounters, with the highest proportion of encounters happening online (i.e., 52% among this group). Please see [Annex C1](#) for a breakdown of where the racially insensitive encounters occurred.

Public confidence towards Government efforts in managing racial harmony

4. Approximately half of the respondents agreed that Singapore's laws were adequate to protect racial harmony.

- a. 49% of the respondents agreed that Singapore's laws and policies adequately protect racial harmony in Singapore, as compared to 6% who disagreed. 46% held neutral views neither agreeing nor disagreeing that

Singapore's laws and policies adequately protect racial harmony in Singapore.

- b. 53% agreed that existing criminal laws adequately deter racially offensive conduct, as compared to 7% who disagreed. 39% held neutral views neither agreeing nor disagreeing that existing criminal laws in Singapore adequately deter racially offensive conduct in Singapore.
5. Most were of the view that the Government should do more to protect racial harmony and opined that it was both the Government's and the community's responsibility to strengthen race relations.
- a. The majority of the respondents (61%) felt that the Government should do more to protect racial harmony, with only 3% disagreeing. 36% held neutral views neither agreeing nor disagreeing that the Government should do more.
 - b. The majority of the respondents (63%) also opined that both the Government and the community hold equal responsibility to strengthen race relations. In contrast, 19% felt it was mainly the Government's responsibility and 18% felt it was mainly the community's responsibility.

Public support for Maintenance of Racial Harmony Bill:

6. The poll showed that there is public support for the various proposed legislative measures in the Maintenance of Racial Harmony Bill (the "**Bill**"), namely:
- a. Community Remedial Initiative;
 - b. Restraining Orders; and
 - c. Countermeasures against Foreign Influence.
7. Community Remedial Initiative: The Community Remedial Initiative is intended to allow those who have committed less serious race-related offences to participate in community remedial activities that help the offender mend relations with the community. These activities will be in lieu of criminal prosecution.
- a. More than half the respondents (55%) supported the proposal for community remedial activities in place of prosecution for less serious race-related offences. This is compared to 18% who felt that all offenders should be prosecuted in court and that community remedial activities are not necessary. 28% chose "I have no view".
8. Restraining Orders: The Bill proposes to allow the Minister for Home Affairs to issue Restraining Orders to stop individuals from producing or distributing content that could threaten racial harmony in Singapore. This will allow the Government to act swiftly and pre-emptively against such content, before more harm is caused.

- a. The majority of the respondents (65%) agreed that allowing racially offensive content to spread could threaten racial harmony, with 4% disagreeing.
 - b. About three-quarters (73%) agreed that racially offensive content should be removed as quickly as possible, while only 3% disagreed. A smaller 24% held neutral views as compared to 31% who held neutral views neither agreeing nor disagreeing that allowing racially offensive content to spread could threaten racial harmony.
9. Countermeasures against Foreign Influence: The Bill proposes to introduce measures to protect our race-based organisations from malicious foreign influence.
- a. The majority of the respondents (67%) agreed that Singapore's racial harmony could be threatened by malicious foreign influence, with only 4% disagreeing.

About three-quarters (74%) agreed that there should be laws to protect our race-based entities from malicious influence by foreign actors, while only 3% disagreed.