

SINGAPORE

A Look at Upcoming Legislation to Combat Trafficking in Persons

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1. Introduction

On November 11, 2013, Mr Christopher De Souza announced in Parliament his intent to introduce a draft Private Member's Bill to criminalize the trafficking in persons and minors for the purpose of sexual exploitation, forced incarceration, slave labour and forced organ trafficking ("TIP"). Victims of TIP are abducted or recruited in the country of origin, transferred through transit regions and then exploited in the destination country.¹ On October 7, 2014, the Bill was tabled in Parliament.²

The Bill is standard-setting. It is only one of three Private Members' Bills to be tabled since Singapore's independence.³ If passed, the Bill will be the first statute that is dedicated to combatting human trafficking in and through Singapore.

The idea for the Bill was well-received in Parliament. The Senior Minister of State for Home Affairs (for the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Home Affairs) Mr. Masagos Zulkifli commended the effort by Mr De Souza and stated that the Bill was "*an essential progression in [Singapore's] fight against TIP.*"⁴

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¹ United National Office on Drugs and Crime ("UNODC"), Trafficking in Persons: Global Patterns, 17 (Apr. 2006), available at http://www.unodc.org/pdf/traffickinginpersons_report_2006ver2.pdf (last visited on Oct. 30, 2014).

² See Prevention of Human Trafficking Bill (Bill No. 39/2014), available at <http://www.parliament.gov.sg/sites/default/files/Prevention%20of%20Human%20Trafficking%20Bill%2039-2014.pdf> (last visited on Oct. 31, 2014).

³ The first Private Members' Bill to be passed was the Maintenance of Parents Act (Cap 167B, Rev. Ed. 1996) tabled by then-Nominated Member of Parliament Walter Woon, which was passed in 1995. Professor Walter Woon is the President of the Society of International Law (Singapore). On October 7, 2014, another Private Members' Bill, the Animals and Birds (Amendment) Bill, was also tabled in Parliament.

⁴ Oral Answers to Questions on the Findings of Inter-agency Task Force on Trafficking in Persons. See Singapore