



## Little India Riot Inquiry Findings: The committee recommends...

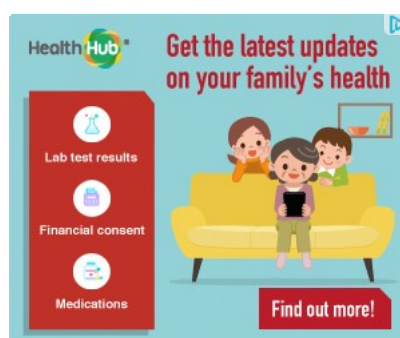


*The chaotic scene at Race course Road during the Little India Riot.*

by **FOO JIE YING**  
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Yesterday, the Committee of Inquiry into the Little India riot, which broke out last December, released its findings. It had these recommendations:

### 1. IMPROVE POLICE COMMUNICATION



There should be a more effective communication system within the Singapore Police Force, the committee said.  
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On the night of the riot, both the police radio airwaves and the mobile phone network were jammed.

A sizeable number of police officers were present, but "scattered in small pockets across the riot area and unaware of each other's positions".

As a result, they could not form up into a critical force, the committee found.

## **2. MORE TRAINING FOR FRONTLINE OFFICERS**

Frontline officers should be given the necessary equipment and training to handle rapidly escalating public order situations before the Special Operations Command (SOC) troop arrives.

As they are most familiar with the ground, the committee felt they would be "well-placed to nip such situations in the bud".

## **3. HIRE MORE OFFICERS**

The police should increase their manpower resources, including the SOC, to maintain safety in mass congregation areas, and develop contingency plans for rapid response to public order incidents.

Police witnesses had pointed out during the inquiry that it would be tough to deploy even more resources to Little India as they have to take into account the security demands islandwide.

It is, however, important to focus on quality rather than quantity, the committee noted.

## **4. BUILD ON HOME TEAM COORDINATION**

The police and the Singapore Civil Defence Force should further strengthen their teamwork on the ground, something the committee called a "positive outcome of the riot".

This could be in the form of training together for public order incidents and reviewing the joint infrastructure necessary to strengthen a collaborative response.

## 5. REVIEW PROTOCOL FOR EMERGENCY ACTIVATION

The police should review its protocol when it comes to activating resources for emergencies, and "proactively seek out other areas where unnecessary red tape can be cut".

This is in light of the delayed arrival of the SOC - partly due to the multiple layers of approval required to activate the troop.

## 6. ENHANCE SECURITY IN FOREIGNER-CONCENTRATED AREAS

As it is impossible and undesirable to do away with central meeting points for foreign workers like Little India, the committee suggested enhancing security features instead, such as installing additional cameras and lighting.

Other than acting as deterrents against crime, they will also give the police a better situational picture in the event of any public order incident.

## 7. MORE SERVICES AND AMENITIES NEAR DORMITORIES

Bringing provision shops and vendors who provide services like remittance and sale of phone cards near dormitories could encourage workers to stay in rather than congregate in an area.

## 8. IMPROVE ENFORCEMENT AT HOT SPOTS

Any event that could spark off a breakdown of public order can be prevented if public drunkenness at hot spots - areas where large crowds typically indulge in heavy drinking - is strictly controlled.

Restrictions on alcohol consumption should target "truly public areas" at hot spots like walkways and playgrounds, instead of eateries and their immediate vicinities.

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