

Key Highlights From AG Lucien Wong's Opening Of The Legal Year 2023 Speech



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RULE OF LAW AND DUTY OF THE LEGAL SERVICE

Legal Service's Duty To Uphold The Rule of Law



The Legal Service's vision is to be 'a trusted Legal Service, upholding the Rule of Law and advancing Singapore's interests.' We consider it our sacrosanct duty to uphold the Rule of Law in Singapore.

Lucien Wong

Attorney-General and President of the Legal Service Commission

► What Is The Rule Of Law?

A society governed by Rule of Law has:



clear, publicised and legitimately enacted laws,



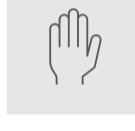
that are enforced in a fair and efficient manner,



disputes over which are determined by independent judges,



such that no person (including and especially the Government) is above the law, and



there are credible and effective means for individuals to challenge the arbitrary exercise of power.

► Government's* Commitment To The Rule Of Law

The Government's non-negotiable commitment to the Rule of Law has been central to Singapore's success since independence

Both elected office holders and public servants need to recognise that the Government's electoral mandate is to uphold the law and, if necessary, to change the law

There is no place in our system for achieving a policy objective at the expense of the law

► The Legal Service's Role In Upholding The Rule Of Law

- The Legal Service has a central role to play in upholding the Rule of Law
- The job of Legal Service Officers is to render **objective, unbiased, and independent** legal advice
- The Legal Service abides by the following principles:
 - Being respectful of the Government's democratic mandate and helping to facilitate the Government's policy agenda, in accordance with the law
 - Being firm and realistic in giving advice and not giving the impression that something is legally defensible when it is not
 - Fulfilling our overarching duty to the Court, when we represent the Government in Court, by presenting the facts and the law in a fair manner

EXAMPLE



The Legal Service supported the Government in enacting the suite of laws and measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Advising on the legality of measures
- Drafting the implementing legislation
- Representing the Government when the measures were challenged in court

Importance Of The Rule Of Law To Singapore's Success



... without the Rule of Law, a small island with no natural resources has little to offer to the rest of the world, no matter how many incentives and promises we dish out.

...

It is vital that all levels of Government appreciate how critical the Rule of Law is, and that unwavering commitment is needed to ensure that we are governed by the Rule of Law for the next generation and beyond.

Lucien Wong

Attorney-General and President of the Legal Service Commission