



**SINGAPORE
POLICE FORCE**

POLICE NEWS RELEASE

YEAR END CRIME CONCERNS AND CRIME PREVENTION OUTREACH

The year-end period is a time for celebrations and shopping.

Crime Concerns

2 During this period, the Police have observed a rise in cases of Theft from Persons and E-Commerce Scams which may involve sellers from overseas. Among these crimes, the number of cases reported from October to December was higher than those in other quarters. The number of crime cases are as follows:

	2016			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Theft from Person	207	243	204	222
E-Commerce Scams	499	507	549	571

Crime Prevention Initiative

Enhanced Police Presence

3 There will be enhanced Police presence, both uniformed and plainclothes in shopping malls during this year-end period. Plainclothes police officers will step up checks on suspicious persons and engage the shoppers and retailers to provide crime prevention advisories. In particular, they will remind shoppers to take care of their belongings and to report to the Police if they notice any suspicious persons or articles.

Launch of Anti-Scam Visuals and Campaign

4 Mr Amrin Amin, Parliamentary Secretary for Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Health launched the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) and the Singapore Police Force (SPF)'s annual Year-End Crime Prevention Campaign on 24 November 2017 at Chinatown Point.

5 This year's campaign will run for 4 months (24 November 2017 to 19 March 2018) and will leverage on social media to promote a "Vote the most Unpopular Scammer" contest which is an extension of last year's "Black Heart Awards" TV commercial. The campaign focuses on the four types of scams that are still rampant today: Internet Love Scam, Impersonation Scam, E-commerce scam & Credit-for-Sex scam. During the campaign, artistes posing as "scammers" will take to the streets to conduct street interviews and challenges to raise awareness of scams and provide more information on how scammers typically deceive victims to part with their money. The engagement will be recorded and uploaded onto YouTube and the NCPC's Facebook page.

6 In addition, there will also be a month-long (24 November 2017 to 21 December 2017) online anti-scam quiz where participants can take part to test on their knowledge about scams. The quiz can be found on the scamalert.sg website and participants who answer all the questions correctly can stand to win attractive weekly prizes and be eligible for the grand draw on 27 January 2018.

7 Chairman of NCPC, Mr Tan Kian Hoon, said, "As crimes are quickly shifting online, NCPC is currently embarking on an extensive social media campaign to educate the public on scams. We hope that the public can support this campaign and help share the anti-scam messages with their loved ones and friends. Who knows, you just might be able to help prevent someone from becoming a victim."

Police Efforts to Clamp Down on Scam Syndicates

8 Since June 2017, officers from the Commercial Affairs Department (CAD) of the Singapore Police Force and the Criminal Investigation Department of the Ministry of Public Security of the People's Republic of China conducted a joint investigation into a credit-for-sex scam syndicate based in China. In an operation conducted between 6 and 7 July 2017, the Chinese Police conducted simultaneous raids across four provinces in China and arrested 49 members of a syndicate responsible for these scams. CAD also arrested six Singaporeans for their possible involvement in the scams.

9 Director CAD, Mr David Chew said, "Criminal groups are hiding behind the Internet to target victims across borders. This successful operation is the culmination of a joint collaboration between the Police Forces of China and Singapore and is testament of the strong ties with our Chinese counterparts. I would like to thank the Chinese Police for its strong commitment to work with us to disrupt this transnational syndicate."

10 Please refer to **Annex A** for the details of the joint operation.

Crime Prevention Advisory

11 The Police would like to reiterate the importance of staying vigilant and encourage members of the public to adopt the following crime preventive measures this festive season.

E-Commerce Scams

- Buy or sell items online only with those that you know and trust;
- Check the seller's track record by reading reviews or contacting previous customers;
- Where advance payments are required, use shopping platforms that only release your payment upon receipt of item;
- Never give your bank account numbers, credit card numbers and personal information to strangers; and
- Insist on cash on delivery and arrange for a physical meet-up with the seller to verify the authenticity of the goods prior to making payment

Theft

- Never leave your belongings unattended in public places such as on a table at eateries or in a shopping trolley;
- Do not be distracted by strangers creating a commotion or accidentally bumping/spilling something on you;
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash with you; and
- Remember to sling your handbag in front of you and ensure that it is closed at all times

12 The public is also reminded to be considerate to others when celebrating the year-end festivities in public areas and to avoid doing anything that may cause annoyance or compromise the safety of others. Police would not hesitate to take action against any person who commits crime or to cause nuisance to the general public under the guise of festivities.



The National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) and the Singapore Police Force (SPF)'s annual Year-End Crime Prevention Campaign was launched by Mr Amrin Amin, Parliamentary Secretary for Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Health, Mr Tan Kian Hoon (far left), Chairman of National Crime Prevention Council, Deputy Assistant Commissioner of Police William Koh (second from right), Deputy Commander of Central Police Division and Mr Li Nanxing (far right), Honorary Crime Prevention Ambassador.



Mr Amrin Amin, Parliamentary Secretary for Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Health and Mr Tan Kian Hoon, Chairman of National Crime Prevention Council at one of the exhibition booth.

ANNEX A – FACT SHEET JOINT INVESTIGATION INTO CREDIT-FOR-SEX SCAM SYNDICATE BETWEEN SINGAPORE POLICE FORCE AND THE CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION DEPARTMENT OF THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SECURITY OF THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

In the first half of 2017, the Police received at least 300 reports of credit-for-sex scams and victims were cheated of at least S\$880,000. Investigations revealed that the culprits behind the scams operated overseas and cheated Singaporean victims through social media platforms.

2 In such scams, syndicate members in China impersonated attractive women residing in Singapore and used social media platforms such as Wechat, LINE and Skype to befriend unsuspecting male victims in Singapore. They would offer sexual services to the victims but required them to purchase Alipay credits or iTunes gift cards to be sent to the syndicate as deposit. In some cases, the victims were intimidated to pay more money to the syndicate even though they eventually rejected the purported services. In all cases, the victims did not get to meet the ‘women’. Investigations revealed that the scammers were based in China.

3 Since June 2017, officers from Commercial Affairs Department (CAD) and the Criminal Investigation Department of the Ministry of Public Security of the People’s Republic of China conducted a joint investigation into a credit-for-sex scam syndicate based in China. In an operation conducted between 6 and 7 July 2017, the Chinese Police conducted simultaneous raids across four provinces in China and arrested 49 members of a syndicate responsible for these scams. CAD also arrested six Singaporeans for their possible involvement in the scams. Three of them were charged in July 2017. In October 2017, Eric Lin Weishen and Elson Lim Yunjun were convicted and sentenced to 12 months’ and 10 months’ imprisonment respectively for assisting the syndicate to transfer its criminal proceeds to China. The remaining three suspects were administered stern warnings in lieu of prosecution.

4 Director CAD, Mr David Chew said, “Criminal groups are hiding behind the Internet to target victims across borders. This successful operation is the culmination of a joint collaboration between the Police Forces of China and Singapore and is testament of the strong ties with our Chinese counterparts. I would like to thank the Chinese Police for its strong commitment to work with us to disrupt this transnational syndicate.”