

Kwan, Karen. Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports.
Letter to No To Rape member. 19 Jan. 2009.

Excerpted -

Singapore has adopted a comprehensive multi-pronged approach to deal with the Trafficking in Persons issue, eg. the comprehensive legal framework (provisions in the Penal Code and the Women's Charter) and a robust operational framework to deal with vice and human trafficking.

Singapore takes a tough stance against immigration offenders, as well as those involved in human trafficking and human smuggling. To combat the problem, the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority gathers and shares information with overseas security agencies and leverages on technology to tighten our border security checks. On the enforcement front, the Police has a dedicated unit that looks into vice issues, including trafficking of women for commercial sexual exploitation. The Police is always mindful of the possibility that some women in the vice trade may have been forced into prostitution or brought into Singapore under false pretences or against their will. As such, the Police interviews every foreign sex worker arrested to establish whether they are the victims of coercion or deception. If this turns out to be the case, the Police will investigate to identify and prosecute the offenders. The Police monitors crime trends and the various modus operandi relating to trafficking-related offences and takes pre-emptive measures, where appropriate. All reports of alleged exploitation of women are taken seriously and are thoroughly investigated.

The issue of marital immunity was discussed extensively in Parliament when the Penal Code Amendment Bill was tabled in Parliament last year. Parliament deliberated long and hard over this issue, before agreeing to adopt a balanced calibrated approach which protects vulnerable women as well as preserves the institution of marriage. With the latest amendments to the Penal Code, the woman may take pro-active steps to prevent sexual abuse by her husband by seeking a court injunction or a personal protection order. Any forced intercourse by the husband on her under these circumstances will not be covered by marital immunity. The Ministry of Home Affairs will monitor the situation and if necessary, enhance the measures to protect women.