

## **Deliberate online falsehoods a 'serious global problem': Charles Chong**

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Deliberate online falsehoods are a serious global problem, which many countries, including Singapore, have to grapple with, said Deputy Speaker Charles Chong on Wednesday (Mar 14).

He was giving his opening remarks as the chair of the Select Committee on Deliberate Online Falsehoods, on its first day of public hearings.

“It is a complex problem, affecting us in many different ways,” he said.

Over the next three days, the committee will hear from witnesses who can help in understanding different aspects of the problem, from media to technology, racial and religious relations to national security, he said. He added that some of the witnesses are experts from overseas.

“They can share with us what has happened, and what is being done, in other countries, so that we can draw relevant lessons for ourselves,” he said.

**Among the speakers on Wednesday are Institute of Policy Studies researchers Mathew Mathews, Assistant Professor Michael Raska, from the S Rajaratnam School of International Studies. Singapore Management University's law school dean Goh Yihan.**

The Committee completed a seven-week public consultation, including a one-week extension, and has received a total of 164 representations, Mr Chong said, adding that it has invited 79 individuals and organisations to give oral evidence to date.

“They represent a cross-section of the representations we received; in some cases, there were representations which required further clarification. We may revise the witness list as the hearings progress,” he said.

The decisions of the Committee on its process so far have been “unanimous and consensual” he said.

“This reflects our common intention to engage widely on our terms of reference,” he added in his opening remarks.

The Committee will examine and report on the phenomenon of using digital technology to deliberately spread falsehoods online, the motivations and reasons for the spreading of such falsehoods, and the parties engaging in such activities and the consequences that the spread of online falsehoods can have on Singapore, including its institutions and democratic processes.

It will also look at how Singapore can prevent and combat online falsehoods.