

Little India Riot: Most Singaporeans Remain Calm and Call for Restraint

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Migrant worker advocacy groups issued statements that condemned the rioters, but cautioned people against making scapegoats of foreign workers.

Transient Workers Count Too said it was concerned about the online vitriol and xenophobia against foreign workers. "This can only perpetuate a vicious circle of hatred that can lead to more violence and may even cost lives," said president Russell Heng.

The Migrant Workers' Centre said it had obtained details of the worker who died and contacted his employer to offer help, such as making funeral arrangements.

"The events of (Sunday) clearly show that peace and harmony should never be taken for granted," said chairman Yeo Guat Kwang, who is also an MP for Ang Mo Kio GRC.

Researchers and academics told *The Straits Times* that more needs to be done to understand and prevent the causes of the riot.

Sociologist Mathew Mathews said: "It will be important for us to continue to bring the message of tolerance, social cohesion, and good law and order to migrant workers who may come from societies where norms and values may be different from ours."

The Culture Kitchen's Ms Tan added that a brighter spotlight needs to be shone on troubles faced by workers. Reports of their not being paid or, in one extreme example, being left for dead in an alley, may have led to simmering resentment, she said.

All agreed, however, that the culprits have to be brought to justice. The Singapore Business Federation denounced in a statement "the unwarranted violence and blatant lawlessness displayed".

Echoing the views of many, it said: "The images of (Sunday's) incident spread though the social media shattered Singapore's image as a peaceful and harmonious city."

Additional reporting by Kash Cheong

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