

Google Removes Blog with Hate Speech against Filipinos in S'pore

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The blog that hosted a hate-filled post targeting the Filipino population here has been taken down by Google as it violated its content policy.

Blood Stained Singapore — which was hosted by Blogger, a blog-publishing service owned by Google — was removed on Wednesday, a day after the Philippine Embassy in Singapore posted a statement on its website that it had asked the Republic's Government to hold the blogger accountable.

Responding to queries as to why the blog was removed, Google referred this newspaper to its content policy, which states that bloggers should not “cross the line by publishing hate speech ... content that promotes hate or violence towards groups based on race, ethnicity, religion, disability, gender, age, veteran status or sexual orientation/gender identity”.

When asked, Google did not explain why the blog was removed only after the embassy spoke out against it. Several police reports have been lodged over the blog post. The police are investigating.

The embassy did not respond to TODAY's queries by press time. Nevertheless, a Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) spokesperson said the embassy did not raise any specific issues of unhappiness with the ministry.

The embassy said in the statement that it believes the views of the blogger do not reflect the general beliefs of people here. Among other things, it also advised Filipinos not to stoop to the level of the blogger by responding in kind, as the blogger clearly intends to create friction.

The incident comes weeks after some Singaporeans had expressed their displeasure about a group of Filipinos' plans to celebrate their country's Independence Day in front of Ngee Ann City on Orchard Road.

The organisers, who claimed that they had received anonymous phone calls demanding that the event be cancelled, eventually called it off. Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong had said on Facebook that he was appalled to read about the furore and stressed that Singaporeans “must treat people in Singapore the way we ourselves expect to be treated overseas”.

On the latest incident, Mr Vikram Nair, Member of Parliament (MP) for Sembawang, said the blog post was a sign that some people are trying to stir controversy and the blogger's views were not widespread. “A takedown of the blog is the most obvious way to manage this issue. Other actions can also be taken, depending on the way such people express their views, such as trying to incite violence,” he added.

Dr Tan Ern Ser, an Institute of Policy Studies sociologist, said the post may be related to the issue of imported labour, as “some see (foreigners) in negative terms: Competing with Singaporeans for jobs, space and amenities”.

Still, Mr Baey Yam Keng, MP for Tampines, noted that feelings may get amplified because of social media. He added: “The enormity of social media is such that people may post these kinds of things for many reasons. I’m not sure of the intention behind this post.”

Mr Baey said on Wednesday he had spoken to a Filipino family during his house visits. They did not “seem to be too affected” and “were quite cool” about the blog post, he said. “I think Filipino and other foreign families who have been here for several years know that the Singapore community is not like this. This is probably the case of one extremist and (the encounter) gives me the assurance that they understand that the post did not resonate with Singaporeans.”