

**CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION
AGAINST WOMEN**



SHADOW REPORT BY PROJECT X SINGAPORE

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About the report

Established in 2008, Project X Society is a non-profit organisation that provides social, emotional, and health services to people in the sex, entertainment, and massage industry. Our core activities include conducting sexual health outreach, supporting sex workers looking to exit the industry, casework (including emotional and legal support) for sex workers in distress, public education, and research.

This report was developed with key findings from our various research projects we have undertaken over the years as well as the cases we have handled.

Executive Summary

This report focuses on the current key issues faced by sex workers in Singapore, due to the absence of substantive legal protections. Sex work, which is being done by largely both cisgender and transgender women in Singapore, is an inherently gendered issue,¹ thereby intersecting with the issues of violence against women and gender inequality. This highlights the importance of addressing these issues within the context of CEDAW.

The *de facto* criminalisation of sex work in Singapore creates barriers to sex workers accessing social services, health services, and the criminal justice system. Criminalisation endorses, facilitates, justifies, perpetuates and tolerates various forms of gender-based violence against sex workers.²

Sex workers in Singapore are vulnerable to different forms of violence, including emotional, physical, and sexual abuse. This violence is often fueled and enabled by societal stigma, discrimination, and the criminalisation of sex work. Recognising violence against sex workers as violence against women is therefore crucial due to the interrelation of gender-based violence and systemic inequality.³

This is the second time that the concerns of sex workers in Singapore are being brought to CEDAW. Key recommendations for the State as summarised are:

- Ensure that sex workers are not arrested under the laws that were created to protect them.
- Establish a framework to protect sex workers from criminalisation when reporting crimes against them - including but not limited to sexual, physical, and financial violence.
- Provide victims with adequate social and emotional support to support them through the reporting process.
- Review immigration policies to ensure that migrant sex workers are not deterred from reporting crimes against them including but not limited to sexual exploitation, sexual assault, and human trafficking.
- Law enforcement agencies must treat stealthing as a serious sexual crime and encourage more victims to come forward to report.
- Cease to film sex workers during a police raid and to treat all sex workers as potential victims of a crime.
- Empower and equip *performing artiste* nightclub workers with skills to negotiate with their employers and knowledge about where to seek help when in need.

¹ United Nations Human Rights Special Procedures, ‘Eliminating discrimination against sex workers and securing their human rights’, (Mandate of the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls, 7 December 2023), A/HRC/WG.11/39/1, para 3.

² CEDAW Committee, General Recommendation No. 35 on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No 19 (2017), CEDAW/C/GC/35, para. 29 (i).

³ Project X, “Annual Report 2021”, p. 10 - 13.< <https://theprojectx.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Annual-Report-2021-SIS.pdf>> Accessed 5 April 2024.

I. Context

1. People who work in the sex industry in Singapore are made up of various marginalised communities, including women, LGBTQI persons, migrants, migrant spouses, and persons from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.
2. Many migrants who make up the majority of the industry's workforce come from neighbouring Asian countries and do not have formal education. Our recent 2024 survey showed that of 400 women we interviewed, the highest level of education were degree holders and only 8.5% of respondents came from this demographic.
3. Transgender persons who face various marginalisations on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity and expression (SOGIE) were also disproportionately represented in the industry.
4. A study estimated that there are about 8030 cisgender female sex workers at any one point in time⁴. There are an estimated 800 workers working in licensed brothels, which means 90% of the industry exists outside the formalised and regulated system.
5. In a 2021 iteration of the World Values Survey conducted by the Institute of Policy Studies, it was found that 68.3% of respondents said "prostitution was never or seldom justifiable".⁵ However, the Singapore government recognises that "no country has successfully eradicated prostitution" and that Singapore adopts a "pragmatic approach" which involves suppressing organised crime and addressing the "public nuisance" caused by sex work.⁶
6. While we recognise the need to balance public order and the interests of various groups in Singapore, we believe that firstly, rights are indivisible, and secondly that there is room to improve the protections for sex workers in Singapore, given how the gendered and racialised labour of sex workers serves a function in Singapore society.

II. Laws on Sex Work in Singapore

7. The laws surrounding sex work in Singapore are varied and complex, cutting across different pieces of legislation. While the act of providing sexual services in exchange for money is in

⁴ Quaye, S. E. D., Cheng, Y., Tan, R. K. J., Koo, J. R., Prem, K., Teo, A. K. J., & Cook, A. R. (2023). Application of the network scale-up method to estimate the sizes of key populations for HIV in Singapore using online surveys. *Journal of the International AIDS Society*, 26(3), e25973. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jia2.25973>

⁵ Justin Ong, 'Singapore still conservative on moral, sexuality issues, but more liberal since 2002: IPS survey', (Straits Times, 03 Feb 2021) <<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/community/singapore-still-conservative-on-moral-sexuality-issues-but-more-liberal-since>> Accessed 15 April 2024.

⁶ "In Singapore, we take a pragmatic approach towards vice. We prioritise our efforts by ensuring organised crime groups and syndicates do not gain a foothold through vice activities; and addressing public nuisance caused by vice-related activities such as soliciting in public, and vice in heartlands." Second Reading of the Women's Charter (Amendment) Bill 2019 - Wrap-Up Speech by Ms Sun Xueling, Senior Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of National Development (4 Nov 2019) <<https://www.mha.gov.sg/mediaroom/parliamentary/second-reading-of-the-women-s-charter-amendment-bill-2019---wrap-up-speech-by-ms-sun-xueling-senior-parliamentary-secretary-ministry-of-home-affairs-and-ministry-of-national-development/>> Accessed 15 April 2024.

itself not criminalised, many sex work-related activities such as soliciting, owning and running brothels, and profiting off of sex workers, are criminalised.

8. Effectively, sex workers are subjected to police entrapment, checks, arrests, and detentions.

Summary of types of sex workers and the conditions of their work:

Type of sex worker	Conditions of their work	
Licensed brothel based sex workers under the Medical Surveillance Scheme ⁷	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Mostly migrant sex workers from Thailand, Vietnam, China and Malaysia; workers are on a Special Pass.Subjected to mandatory HIV testing and other licensing conditions.	
Unlicensed brothel or apartment based sex workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">People who run the brothels are subjected to being charged under the Women’s Charter for running a brothel or place of assignation.	Mostly migrant workers on tourist visas who will be deported upon arrest and blacklisted from returning pursuant to Section 8(3)(e) of the Immigration Act Subjected to police raids.
Indirect sex workers at entertainment establishments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Either on a tourist visa, work permit, or <i>performing artiste</i> visa.Subjected to sales quotas; may be coerced into doing sex work compensate for falling short of sales quotas.Establishments are charged for employing workers without a valid work visa under the Employment of Foreign Manpower Act.	
Agency based sex workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">People who run the agencies are subjected to being charged under the Women’s Charter for living on the earnings of sex work.	
Street based sex workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Miscellaneous Offences Act article 19 criminalises soliciting in a public place for sex work.Migrant sex workers will be deported; local sex workers will be fined (S\$1000/ USD\$732 for the first offence)	
Massage and beauty parlour workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Largely made up of local women; migrant spouses without citizenshipSubjected to police raidsBusiness owners are subjected to fines of up to S\$10,000 (USD\$7320) and/or up to 2 years imprisonment under the Massage Establishments Act	
Independent, freelance sex workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Largely made up of local women; migrant spouses without citizenship; independent migrant women.May be arrested but no clear charge if only doing sex work	

III. Realities of sex work: vulnerability to multiple forms of abuse

9. Sex workers, marginalised and engaged in stigmatised work, navigate a hostile environment marked by significant power differentials with their clients, agents and pimps, establishment

⁷ The Medical Surveillance Scheme was introduced in 1976. CL, Goh, & Roy Chan (1995), "Prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases among commercial sex workers in Singapore from 1977 to 1993: the effects of screening measures." *Ann Acad Med Singapore*, Jul;24(4): 500-4, <<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/8849176>>, Accessed 15 April 2024.

owners, and law enforcement officers.⁸

10. As documented in case notes, annual reports,⁹ and research papers¹⁰ by Project X – common occurrences of abuse and violence in the workplace include:

- A. **Assault and Violence:** Sex workers face a heightened risk of physical and sexual violence, often experiencing rough treatment and facing the threat of assault and rape when declining customer requests. They are vulnerable to various forms of sexual crimes, such as stealthing (non-consensual condom removal) and technology-facilitated sexual violence.¹¹
 - a. Additionally, we advocate that when a client deceives a sex worker by refusing or avoiding payment as agreed upon for sexual services, it should be considered as sexual assault or rape,¹² as consent for the sexual act was obtained through fraudulent means.
- B. **Psychological and Emotional Abuse:** Sex workers frequently endure verbal abuse and dehumanising treatment, including derogatory name calling and insulting remarks about their appearance, character, profession, and abilities. These may be from family and friends, professional, social, and religious communities, members of the public, as well as from support agencies.
- C. **Blackmail, Extortion, Harassment, Threats:** Due to their precarious status, sex workers are extremely susceptible to various forms of harassment from dissatisfied clients or former partners. They frequently face threats and extortion from potential and/or existing customers - including an instance of a police officer¹³ - who leverage on the threat of reporting them to the authorities, exposing their profession, or disseminating intimate content online. These threats may become a coercive force for sex workers, who often are already at risk of arrests and deportation by law enforcement.

IV. Article 15: Equality Before the Law

11. While there have been some high profile cases of abusers of sex workers getting jailed in recent years, many more cases go unreported. (See **Annex 1** for a summary of 11 published cases).

⁸ Project X, “Frequently Asked Questions: What issues do sex workers face?” (n.d.) < <https://theprojectx.org/faq/> > Accessed 17 April 2024. (References to Annual Report 2021, by Project X).

⁹ Project X, “Project X Reports”, < <https://theprojectx.org/reports/> > Accessed 12 April 2024.

¹⁰ Project X, “Articles & Published Works”, < <https://theprojectx.org/articles-published-works/> > Accessed 6 June 2023.

¹¹ Project X, “Annual Report 2021”, (2021) at p 12 < <https://theprojectx.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Annual-Report-2021-SIS.pdf> > Accessed 12 April 2024.

¹² Judge Hilary Penfold, in the case of *Livas*; “Sex workers clearly fall into the category of vulnerable workers in general and may be particularly vulnerable to abuse of this kind” and “Certainly, no one should doubt that fraudulently achieving sexual intercourse by this kind of activity constitutes rape, rather than a dishonest offence, although of course dishonest is a major element of this fact situation”.

¹³ Louisa Tang, ‘High Court sentences ex-NSF to 7 days’ jail for abusing police powers in attempt to get free sex’, (Channel News Asia, 13 March 2024) < <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/singapore/ex-nsf-gets-7-days-jail-abusing-police-powers-get-free-sex-4192181> > Accessed 15 April 2024.

12. For cases that are reported, victim-survivors make police reports often at great personal costs (psychological, financial, emotional costs).
13. Sex workers face various barriers to access justice, chief of which is the perception, held by many law enforcers as well as society at large, of sex workers as criminals or perpetrators themselves. This perception is enabled by, and in turn enables, other systemic barriers, including the criminalised and regulated nature of the industry (as reflected in **Section II** above) and negative media portrayal of sex work and sex workers. Such institutionalised and structural barriers make it difficult and intimidating for sex workers to access justice, thereby creating a situation in violation of CEDAW Article 15 equality before the law.
14. Sex workers who report crimes committed against them are instead arrested, investigated, or told that they are too committing a crime by doing sex work.
 - a. NGO reports indicate that when sex workers report crimes perpetrated against them (e.g., being robbed, raped, assaulted, etc), they have been told by police officers that commercial sex is in fact illegal, and sometimes even questioned if, with that in mind, they would still like to proceed with filing the police report.
 - b. In light of the context that these sex workers are approaching law enforcement as victims of a crime committed against them, such statements are not only harsh and unempathetic towards them, but more worryingly can deter sex workers from following through with reporting this and future crimes against them and from accessing legal recourse.
 - c. Some sex workers go on to get arrested or investigated under Section 146A of the Women's Charter when they report crimes against them. Section 146A criminalises the use of online platforms for offering sexual services to prevent vice syndicates from expanding their operations online. Section 146A of the Women's Charter (Amendment) Act was enacted in 2019 with the intention of safeguarding sex workers being exploited by pimps, by "imposing tougher penalties to match the profits derived from vice crimes"¹⁴. The use of this law on independent or freelance sex workers is therefore worrying as they should not be the target of this legislation.¹⁵
 - d. This misapplication of s 146A has even led to instances where sex workers reporting sexual crimes became subjects of police investigation, contradicting the police's victim-centric approach and discouraging reporting of crimes. As a result, sex workers are traumatised by the reporting process, and abusive clients are empowered to continue to exploit sex workers' fear of reporting.

¹⁴ Sixth periodic report submitted by Singapore under article 18 of the Convention, due in 2021, CEDAW/C/SGP/6, paragraph 181 p. 35.

¹⁵ In the case of *Koh Jaw Hung*, emphasised by the High Court, the clear intention behind the enactment of section 146A was to prevent vice syndicates from transitioning their operations to the online sphere, thereby expanding their client base while maintaining anonymity on the Internet. The Parliament explicitly stated that section 146A aimed to facilitate the police to address individuals who serve as facilitators or intermediaries for sex workers, such as pimps and vice syndicates, rather than independent sex workers who operate autonomously. Simultaneously, independent sex workers are not the target of prosecution or investigation under this legislation. *Koh Jaw Hung v Public Prosecutor* [2019] 3 SLR 516. *Singapore Parliamentary Debates, Official Report* (29 February 2016) vol 94. | *Singapore Parliamentary Debates, Official Report* (10 January 2022) vol 95.

- e. The Singapore government wrote that the “Women’s Charter is designed to protect women in general, including sex workers from being exploited by pimps.”¹⁶ Therefore, it is deeply unsettling that sex workers are being arrested under the Charter that purports to protect them.
- f. **Recommendation: Law enforcement officers should be trained and made aware of the legislative intent of section 146A of the Women’s Charter. Cease using section 146A to arrest and investigate independent sex workers as it is a misapplication of the law.**
- g. **Recommendation: Establish a framework to protect sex workers from unnecessary criminalisation when reporting crimes against them - including but not limited to sexual, physical and financial violence. Include directives to police officers to refrain from arresting or discouraging sex workers when reporting abuse: reports of sexual, physical and financial offences must be treated seriously and investigated regardless of the victim’s immigration and work status. Simultaneously, victims must be provided adequate social and emotional support to support them through the reporting process.**

15. Migrant sex workers face deportation and being blacklisted due to the Immigration Act.

- a. Migrant sex workers make up the majority of the sex industry in Singapore.
- b. The categorisation of migrant sex workers (MSWs) as ‘prohibited immigrants’ under Singapore’s Immigration Act s 8(3)(e) creates a legal barrier, hindering their access to justice.¹⁷
- c. MSWs are deterred from seeking assistance or cooperating with authorities, perpetuating impunity for perpetrators and diminishing trust in law enforcement.¹⁸ MSWs will think twice about reporting crimes against them if they know they will be blacklisted from returning to Singapore in future. Essentially, this classification, while for immigration control, severely impacts MSWs’ access to justice in Singapore.
- d. **Recommendation: Review immigration policies to ensure that migrant sex workers are not deterred from reporting crimes against them including but not limited to sexual exploitation, sexual assault, and human trafficking. Immigration**

¹⁶ CEDAW/C/SGP/6, Sixth periodic report submitted by Singapore under article 18 of the Convention, due in 2021, paragraph 181 p.35

¹⁷ Immigration Act 1959, Rev. Ed. 2020, Article 8 (3e), ‘Prohibited immigrants’. Section 8(3) of the Immigration Act designates certain classes of persons as “prohibited immigrants”. These include persons who have been convicted of an offence, persons living with HIV, or any contagious diseases that make their presence dangerous to the community, and vagrants or habitual beggars. In essence, the Act appears to be designed to prohibit persons who pose a danger to the community in Singapore, or who are financially undesirable in the sense that they will not contribute positively to the economy. However, migrant sex workers do not pose a danger to the community; nor are they financially undesirable.

¹⁸ NSWP, ‘Sex Workers’ Lack of Access to Justice’ (NSWP, 20 May 2020), Brief Paper, p. 4.

policies must not undermine efforts to prevent violence against women, identify or protect victims, or prosecute perpetrators.

16. Difficulty in convicting stealthing (non-consensual condom removal) cases

- a. There were 28 reports of stealthing recorded by Project X between 2019 and 2023. While this is not unique to sex workers, the number of sex workers who report stealthing offences to Project X remains constant every year.
- b. Stealthing, the act of removing a condom during sexual intercourse without consent, is a criminal offence under Penal Code Section 376H.¹⁹ This violates bodily and sexual autonomy, causes emotional harm, and increases risks of pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.
- c. Of the 28 complaints, only seven were reported to police as there is a reluctance among sex workers to report due to fear of repercussions.²⁰ None of the seven cases reported resulted in any conviction of the perpetrator.
- d. To date, there have not been any prosecutions under section 376H.²¹
- e. **Recommendation: Law enforcement officers should be trained and made aware of the legislative intent of section 376H of the Penal Code. Section 376H of the Penal Code clearly establishes that stealthing is a criminal offence. Law enforcement agencies must treat stealthing as a serious sexual crime and encourage more victims to come forward to report.**

17. Media portrayals of sex workers perpetuate stigma and discrimination

- a. Singapore media coverage of sex work and sex workers is often unduly negative, fuelling further stigmatisation and discrimination against sex workers.
- b. Negative media coverage includes frequent articles on police raids on sex workers. In 2023 alone, at least 11 news pieces were written about raids. Law enforcement often invites the media along for raids, so that the media may film and publish sex workers being arrested.^{22, 23, 24} Some of these pictures are insufficiently blurred or not at all.

¹⁹ The Penal Code Section 376H was enacted in 2019 and entered into force in 2022.

²⁰ Project X, "Annual Report 2021", (2021), p. 13 < <https://theprojectx.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Annual-Report-2021-SIS.pdf> > Accessed 17 April 2024.

²¹ Joel Quan En Ng, 'Stealthing: Filing charges for non-consensual condom removal', (SMU Lexicon, 18 May 2023) < <https://smulexicon.com/2023/05/18/stealthing-filing-charges-for-non-consensual-condom-removal/#:~:text=Unfortunately%2C%20you%20may%20have%20been,file%20charges%20against%20your%20boyfriend.> > Accessed 12 April 2024.

²² Andrew Wong, '62 people nabbed in anti-crime blitz targeting entertainment outlets, massage parlours', (Straitstimes, 08 March 2024). < <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/courts-crime/62-people-nabbed-in-anti-crime-blitz-targeting-entertainment-outlets-massage-parlours> > Accessed 11 April 2024.

²³ Andrew Koay, 'I followed S'pore police to 2 illegal heartland brothel raids. I came away very uncomfortable', (Mothership, 10 November 2019) < <https://mothership.sg/2019/11/illegal-brothel-raid-heartlands/> > Accessed 16 April 2024

²⁴ Kerr Puay Hian, 'Orchard area KTV raids: Hostesses & patrons arrested, some tried to escape' (Mothership, 08 March 2024), < <https://mothership.sg/2024/03/police-raid-orchard/> > Accessed 16 April 2024.

- c. Forcefully exposing someone as a sex worker is harmful for the workers themselves as well as their families and children. NGO reports from multiple sex workers highlight the harms they have experienced from being forcibly exposed, including various forms of discrimination and abuse.
 - d. The practice of inviting the media for raids thus contradicts law enforcement's sensitivity training on sexual crime victims' vulnerabilities and undermines efforts to combat discrimination against sex workers.
 - e. In addition, the media tends to portray sex workers in derogatory ways, perpetuating harmful stereotypes and furthering prejudices against an already vulnerable group. For instance, articles have depicted cisgender sex workers as "sleazy and immoral" and transgender sex workers as "monstrous".²⁵
 - f. **Recommendation: Stop filming sex workers during a police raid. Treat all sex workers as potential victims of a crime. Photographs of sex workers, even if blurred, should not be published, especially prior to any legal process to determine guilt.**
 - g. **Recommendation: If the police requires media coverage of raids in order to deter vice syndicates, then articles and pictures regarding raids should focus on syndicate leaders, and not sex workers on the ground. This helps align media representation of raids with the intention of the Women's Charter.**
 - h. **Recommendation: Develop and implement comprehensive media guidelines that promote responsible reporting on issues related to sex work, which are in accordance with Article 5(a) of the CEDAW Convention. These guidelines emphasise the importance of avoiding sensationalism, stigmatisation, and the perpetuation of discriminatory stereotypes against women in the sex industry.**
18. Performing Artistes are vulnerable to sexual coercion and should be resourced in a way that empowers them to speak up.
- a. *Performing Artiste* visas are 6-month work permits given to workers in nightclubs. Their primary role is to perform song and dance as part of the establishment's entertainment.
 - b. The first labour trafficking case was convicted in 2020 and it involved a couple who ran a nightclub in Singapore and trafficked three Bangladeshi women to work seven days a week as dancers. The workers were surveilled, confined, and had their passports

²⁵ In one Chinese media coverage, transgender sex workers were referred to as "human demons". Pinkdot, 'Language matters: towards accurate media reporting on trans people in Singapore', (Civil Society Groups, 28 December 2023) < <https://pinkdot.sg/2023/12/language-matters-towards-accurate-media-reporting-on-trans-people-in-singapore/> > Accessed 11 April 2024.

confiscated. One of the victims was forced to provide sexual services. None of the victims were paid their monthly salary.²⁶

- c. In another convicted case, a Bangladeshi woman who came to Singapore thinking she was going to be a domestic worker was told that she was to work as a dancer for a nightclub instead. She was asked to have sex with her boss' friend and was slapped when she refused.²⁷
- d. Working conditions at nightclubs vary. *Performing artistes* who are hired in entertainment establishments are often subject to strict alcohol sales quotas from bosses, which put pressure on them to avail sexual services in order to meet these quotas.²⁸ Many workers incur debts to work in Singapore, and this can have a considerable impact on their decisions to continue working in potentially exploitative arrangements - some may decide to continue working in these areas, which may disqualify them from trafficking victim indicators.
- e. **Recommendation: Settling-in-programme for workers on *performing artiste* visa, ensuring that they understand their rights and responsibilities while working in Singapore. The programme should also equip workers with skills to negotiate with employers, and knowledge about where to seek help when in need.**
- f. **Recommendation: Reward establishments for safer and fairer working arrangements including but not limited to, delinking salaries from alcohol sales quotas, empowering workers with knowledge on working hours, off days, medical leave, and so on.**

V. Concluding Remarks

19. Sex workers face multiple vulnerabilities and challenges, compounded by structural and societal barriers to their abilities to access justice and to live free of stigma. These experiences should not be exacerbated by media portrayals. Instead, media portrayals of sex workers should be sensitive to their vulnerability and avoid assuming guilt before due legal process.
20. Shutting down adult industry establishments and arresting sex workers may ostensibly 'prevent' experiences of exploitation, violence, and abuse in the short-term, but does not address long-term conditions of exploitation, violence, and abuse.

²⁶ Louisa Tang, "Nightclub couple who trafficked Bangladeshi women jailed 5.5 years, fined in first such conviction" (Today, 11 Feb 2020), <<https://www.todayonline.com/singapore/nightclub-couple-who-trafficked-bangladeshi-women-jailed-55-years-fined-first-such>> Accessed 22 April 2024

²⁷ Selina Lum, "Two club bosses who told dancers to have sex with customers jailed and fined", (The Straits Times, 26 Aug 2021) <<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/courts-crime/two-club-bosses-who-told-dancers-to-have-sex-with-customers-jailed-and-fined>> Accessed 22 April 2024

²⁸ Yea, Sallie. Paved with Good Intentions?: Human Trafficking and the Anti-Trafficking Movement in Singapore. Palgrave Macmillan, 2020; Greener, J., & Naegler, L. (2022). Between containment and crackdown in Geylang, Singapore: Urban crime control as the statecrafting of migrant exclusion. *Urban Studies*, 59(12), 2565-2581. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00420980211034681>.

21. Instead, we should work towards regulatory models that licence establishments to ensure that sex workers are able to work in safe and fair working conditions, seek assistance, and report exploitative conditions.
22. Alongside regulating establishments, we hope and advocate for a society where sex workers can exercise their right to choose how they make a living, to access justice without barriers where necessary, and to be able to live without stigma, discrimination, or fear.

Annex 1: Case Studies of Convicted and Published Cases

	Date of offence	Case	Sentence	Citation
A	23 Nov 2022	Abdul Rahman, had sex with the worker and refused to pay for her services. This is the third time Abdul Rahman has been sentenced for the same offence.	Three years and 71 days, charged under Penal Code “Cheating”	Lydia Lam, “ Man offered \$2 to sex worker instead of agreed fee in repeat offence, gets jail ”, (Channel News Asia, 31 Oct 2023)
B	25 July 2020	Liaw Jin Yi, forged a bank transaction of S\$25,000 (USD\$18,400) to trick a woman into having sex with him. This is his second forgery offence.	Three and a half years, charged under Penal Code “Cheating”	Lydia Lam, “ Man forged bank transaction of S\$25,000 to trick woman into having sex with him, gets jail ”, (Channel News Asia, 31 Jan 2023)
C	16 April 2023	Goh Jun Liang, dissatisfied with the service by the sex worker, forced her to refund him by using a metal water bottle to repeatedly hit her back and neck.	Six weeks jail, charged under Penal Code “Voluntarily causing hurt”	Lydia Lam, “ Man jailed for attacking sex worker after finding payment ‘not worth it’ ”, (Channel News Asia, 24 Aug 2023)
D	Nov 2022	Fahd Siddiqui, who at the time of the offence was serving his national service with the Singapore Police Force, showed his warrant card to a social escort and threatened to report her to the police unless she provided him with free sexual services.	Seven days jail, charged for corruption.	Louisa Tang, “ High Court sentences ex-NSF to 7 days’ jail for abusing police powers in attempt to get free sex ”, (Channel News Asia, 13 Mar 2024)
E	4 Aug 2020	Yap Kian Heng, stole from a sex worker as he was not satisfied with her services. He assaulted a second sex worker after he insisted on paying her a rate lower than what she had asked for. He also assaulted a masseuse and stole from her after a dispute over the scope of sexual services she would offer him.	15 weeks’ jail, charged for theft and assault.	Shaffiq Alkhatib, “ Jail for man who assaulted, stole from sex workers ”, (The Straits Times, 30 Dec 2022)
F	Jan to August 2021	Tan Chip Huat, a serial conman posed as a “sugar daddy” and offered high monetary remuneration for	Nine years’ corrective training for cheating.	Shaffiq Alkhatib, “ Serial conman cheats 10 women of over \$72k and gets 9 years’

		women to have sex with him. Of the 10 women, at least four were sex workers. He never paid any of them.		corrective training ”, (The Straits Times, 20 Aug 2022)
G	28 Feb 2021	Patian Sohag molested and raped a sex worker who was sleeping at an alley after failing to hire a sex worker because prices were too high.	Three and a half years jail, three strokes of the cane; charged for outrage of modesty and abducting by force.	Louisa Tang, “ 3.5 years’ jail, caning for man who molested, had sex with prostitute sleeping at Geylang alley ”, (Today, 16 Sep 2022)
H	October 2020 to July 2021	Chen Zelin, posed as an agent for social escorts in order to obtain free sex or discounted sexual services from women.	Two years and eight months jail; charged for cheating by personation and threatening to release intimate images	Andrew Wong, “ Jail for married man who posed as social escort agent to get free sex ”, (The Straits Times, 16 April 2024)
I	April 2015 to Jan 2016	De Beers Wong Tian Jun, cheated at least 11 women into having sex with him by pretending to be an agent for “sugar daddies”.	Eight years and five months; charged for cheating and criminal intimidation	Selina Lum, “ Jail term more than doubled for fake sugar daddy agent who duped women into having sex with him ”, (The Straits Times, 2 Dec 2021)
J	21 Feb 2019	Ng Yi Yao, booked the services of a social escort and then posed as an anti-vice police officer in an attempt to get her to offer him free sex. When she refused, he threatened her with a knife and raped her.	18 years jail and 24 strokes of the cane; charged for aggravated rape and aggravated sexual assault by penetration.	Selina Lum, “ 18 years’ jail, caning for man who raped social escort after posing as anti-vice cop ”, (The Straits Times, 23 Aug 2021)
K	30 Aug 2017	Chew Teng Wee raped a sex worker after she refused to have sex with him because he said he had no money to pay her. He took a knife with a 20cm blade and placed it against her neck; forced her to have sex with him; filmed her; and took S\$200 (USD\$147) from her.	14 years’ jail and 24 strokes of the cane; charged for aggravated rape and robbery by night.	Lydia Lam, “ Man jailed, caned for robbing and raping sex worker who begged for her life ”, (Channel News Asia, 22 April 2019)