

Jail for ICA officer who received sex and cash as bribes

Suspended officer sentenced to 2 years and 9 months in jail, ordered to pay penalty

Shaffiq Alkhatib
Court Correspondent

An Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA) officer who committed graft by receiving sex and cash from a foreign sex worker was sentenced to two years and nine months in jail on Monday.

Teo Hwee Peng, 49, was also ordered to pay a penalty of over \$2,600 linked to the amounts he had received – more than \$2,000 and 7,188.88 yuan (S\$1,350) – from Chinese national Liang Qinglan.

Teo, who worked for ICA's Intelligence Operations Branch from 2004 to 2016, has been suspended from duties since Nov 25, 2020.

Before handing down the sentence, Principal District Judge Victor Yeo noted that Teo was a senior ICA officer at the time and his offences were premeditated.

The judge also said a clear message must be sent that acts of corruption must not be condoned.

After a trial, Teo was convicted in May of eight graft charges for receiving cash and sex from Liang in 2018 and 2019.

He was acquitted of one graft charge linked to Liang and three similar charges involving another Chinese national, Ms Cheng Wenjuan.

He received the acquittals after Liang gave unclear and puzzling evidence involving a purported sexual favour, and following Ms Cheng's death from suicide, said Judge Yeo in earlier proceedings.

Ms Cheng, 32, had been accused of offences including multiple counts of graft when she was found dead at the foot of a block of flats in August 2021.

With Teo's discharge amounting to an acquittal, he cannot be charged again for the same offences.

Liang was sentenced to 25



Teo Hwee Peng, 49, has been suspended from duties since Nov 25, 2020.

Before handing down the sentence, Principal District Judge Victor Yeo noted that Teo was a senior ICA officer at the time and his offences were premeditated. The judge also said a clear message must be sent that acts of corruption must not be condoned.

weeks' jail and a fine of \$8,000 in December 2021 after she pleaded guilty to three counts of corruption involving Teo and a separate charge for offering sexual services online.

Teo had received sex and cash from Liang, who wanted to be arrested so that she could buy time and continue working in Singapore.

She knew that foreigners issued with a special pass (SP) could remain here to assist with investigations.

The Chinese national concluded that as long as she was not deported, she could still work.

In earlier proceedings, Deputy Public Prosecutor David Menon said: "(Liang) knew it was wrong to provide sexual services to an immigration officer in exchange for

his help in obtaining an SP, but obliged because she wanted to secure an SP so that she could remain in Singapore to work."

Liang, now 39, had entered Singapore on May 28, 2018, on a social visit pass that expired on July 27 that year.

Some time between July and August 2018, she contacted Teo and he said that he could help her secure a special pass in return for an iPhone X.

Between July and October 2018, Teo invited himself to Liang's home in Jurong West and they had sex.

After the encounter, Liang asked Teo for the procedure to extend her stay in Singapore.

He said he would arrange for her to be arrested.

The court heard that Teo had contacts who alerted him to potential immigration offenders. He gave an informant Liang's details, and the informant in turn alerted an ICA officer.

Liang was arrested on Oct 16, 2018. When asked whether she wanted to remain in Singapore to assist with a related ICA investigation, she agreed.

She paid a fine for overstaying and was issued an SP. Two days later, Teo and Liang met for a meal, which Liang paid for.

She also offered to buy Teo an iPhone, but he declined. Instead, he agreed to her offer of cash of between \$2,100 and \$2,200.

Later that month, Liang also lent Teo 5,000 yuan. He repaid this sum.

The prosecution said she later lent him another 2,000 yuan, but he did not repay this amount.

Defence lawyer Narayanan Vijaya Kumar told the court on Monday that Teo intends to appeal against his conviction and sentence.

Teo was then offered bail of \$50,000.

For each count of graft, an offender can be jailed for up to five years and fined up to \$100,000.

ashaffiq@sph.com.sg