

Remedying Police Corruption: Candid Cops, not Corrupt Crooks

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Executive Summary

- Malaysia is no stranger to corruption, and in this paper we write about the Royal Malaysian Police (PDRM) and the negative public perception it carries.
- The perceived corruption in the PDRM stems mainly from two sets of public interaction with the police: bribes at traffic offences and observations of organised crime activities conducted in the open.
- After identifying reasons behind such perceived corruption in the PDRM, we consider the experiences of the Hong Kong and Singaporean police forces as both have been largely successful in overcoming corruption.
- We make the following proposals to combat corruption:
 - Raising the wages of policemen. Raising wages of rank-and-file and senior PDRM officers, guided by Hong Kong and Singaporean standards, will cost an estimated RM2.55bil annually;
 - Strengthening the independence of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission and setting up an Independent Police Complaints and Misconduct Commission. The Hong Kong and Singapore police forces were formerly plagued by corruption, but the establishment of the Independent Commission Against Corruption and the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau respectively helped solve the problem; and
 - Failing the above two, investing RM12mil in video surveillance technology to reduce traffic-offences bribery.
- Corruption in the police force is just one of the many types of corruption in government enforcement agencies. Following the steps proposed will curb the problem, but strong political will and constant monitoring is required to fully stamp out the problem.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy paper examines the widespread public perception of corruption in the Royal Malaysia Police (*Polis Diraja Malaysia*, PDRM).
- 1.2 We will reference Hong Kong and Singapore, two countries that have achieved a clean image in their police forces. Can their anticorruption processes and in particular, pay structure, be used in the Malaysian context?
- 1.3 Here is our game plan:
 - (a) Identify reasons behind perceived corruption in the police force;
 - (b) Review the examples of Hong Kong and Singapore; and
 - (c) Propose ways to combat corruption: internal pay structure; externally, a strong anticorruption agency; and adopting camera technologies.
- 1.4 Our recommendations are *not* an exhaustive list. Nonetheless they are concrete measures executable even under current political regime, and should yield immediate results. The implementation costs of our proposed measures will be outweighed by savings in terms of national security and peace for the community.
- 1.5 We recognise that there are still many good people in the PDRM, and thank the entire force for guarding our safety. We do not want to see the PDRM's image further tarnished by a few rotten apples—let it not be *sebab nila setitik, rosak susu sebelanga*.

2.0 Why the poor public perception of police?

- 2.1 Transparency International's Global Corruption Barometer 2013¹ found that 76% of respondents in Malaysia felt that police were corrupt/extremely corrupt, ahead of political parties (69%) and public officials and civil servants (46%). Furthermore, 12% of respondents admitted paying a bribe to the police within the previous 12 months. These results place the police as the institution most affected by corruption in Malaysia.
- 2.2 Locally, the 2005 Royal Commission Report on Malaysian Police identified 'perceptions of the widespread incidence of corruption among police personnel' as a serious challenge.² According to the report, the forms of corruption prevalent in PDRM include:³
- (a) Bribe-taking, especially by traffic police, detectives, and investigation officers;
 - (b) Small, opportunistic corruption to avoid police action, such as for minor traffic offences. Not only do these cumulate to a substantial amount, but such corruption involving low-level traffic police personnel has an enormously damaging impact on the image of the PDRM due to its extensive nature;
 - (c) Soliciting for *ang pows* or *duit kopi*;
 - (d) Larger amounts of money involving false motor vehicle accident insurance claims where the police connive with the alleged victims and other parties including lawyers and touts;
 - (e) Corruption involving organised crime syndicates. This is especially serious as it involves major, long-term schemes, large amounts of money and the collusion of some senior police officers. Big-time crime

¹ Transparency International, *Global Corruption Barometer 2013: Malaysia*, 2013, <http://www.transparency.org/gcb2013/country/?country=malaysia>.

² Malaysian Government, Royal Commission to Enhance the Operation and Management of the Royal Malaysia Police, *Report of The Royal Commission To Enhance The Operation And Management of The Royal Malaysia Police*, Kuala Lumpur: Percetakan Nasional Malaysia Berhad, 2005, p. 4.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 117–118.

operators are seldom caught although the activities they are engaged in, such as illegal gambling, prostitution, and drug trafficking can be relatively easily detected and acted upon;

(f) Bribes paid by suspects to investigating officers to influence their work, or bribes solicited by the latter. These bribes may involve not only money but also shares in businesses and long-term business partnerships. This category includes money solicited or given to police to swap urine samples of suspected drug addicts; and

(g) Reselling drugs and property, and pilfering money held under police custody.

2.3 The PDRM's primary job is to fight crime, in accordance with its powers and duties laid out in the Police Act 1967 (Act 344). Broadly speaking, crimes can be classified into two groups:

(a) Organised crime, backed primarily by market forces of supply and demand, such as prostitution, illicit drugs, and gambling; and

(b) Unorganised crime, which is piecemeal in nature, such as robbery, burglary, white-collar crime, rape, and violent assault.

2.4 Rather than combat crime, some PDRM personnel become partners-in-crime. Consequently, public perception of police corruption is affected by several factors including:

(a) The murky relationship between the police and organised crime;

(b) Public interaction with the police, in particular on traffic offences; and

(c) Observations that some police officers live beyond their means.

2.5 These factors are not unique to Malaysia. An international anticorruption body concludes that, 'circumstantial evidence tends to confirm that, in many countries, there are deep interdependent links between organised

crime, politics, and the public sector'⁴ (including the police). Indeed, 'vice, drugs, licensing, and those areas where police officers have regulatory powers are generally cited as being "corruption-prone."⁵

2.6 Digging deeper, there are factors intrinsic to policing as a job that make it particularly vulnerable to corruption, namely:⁶

(a) Discretion: The exercise of discretion is argued to have both legitimate and illegitimate bases;

(b) Low public visibility: Much of what police officers do is not witnessed by members of the public;

(c) Peer group secrecy: "Police culture" is characterised by a high degree of internal solidarity and secrecy;

(d) Managerial secrecy: Police managers have generally worked themselves up from the "beat" and share many of the values held by those they manage;

(e) Status problems: Police officers are sometimes said to be poorly paid relative to their powers;

(f) Contact with criminals: Police officers inevitably come into contact with a wide variety of people who have an interest in the police not doing what they have a duty to do. Such people may have access to considerable resources.

2.7 **Figure 1** depicts the overall picture behind public perception of police corruption. While there are many anticorruption measures that can be implemented to mitigate the situation, we will focus on three: pay structure, who polices the police, and video surveillance technology.

⁴ U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre, *Organised crime and corruption*, 2008, <http://www.u4.no/publications/organised-crime-and-corruption/>.

⁵ Tim Newburn and Barry Webb, *Understanding and preventing police corruption: lessons from the literature*, Home Office London, 1999, p. 46.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

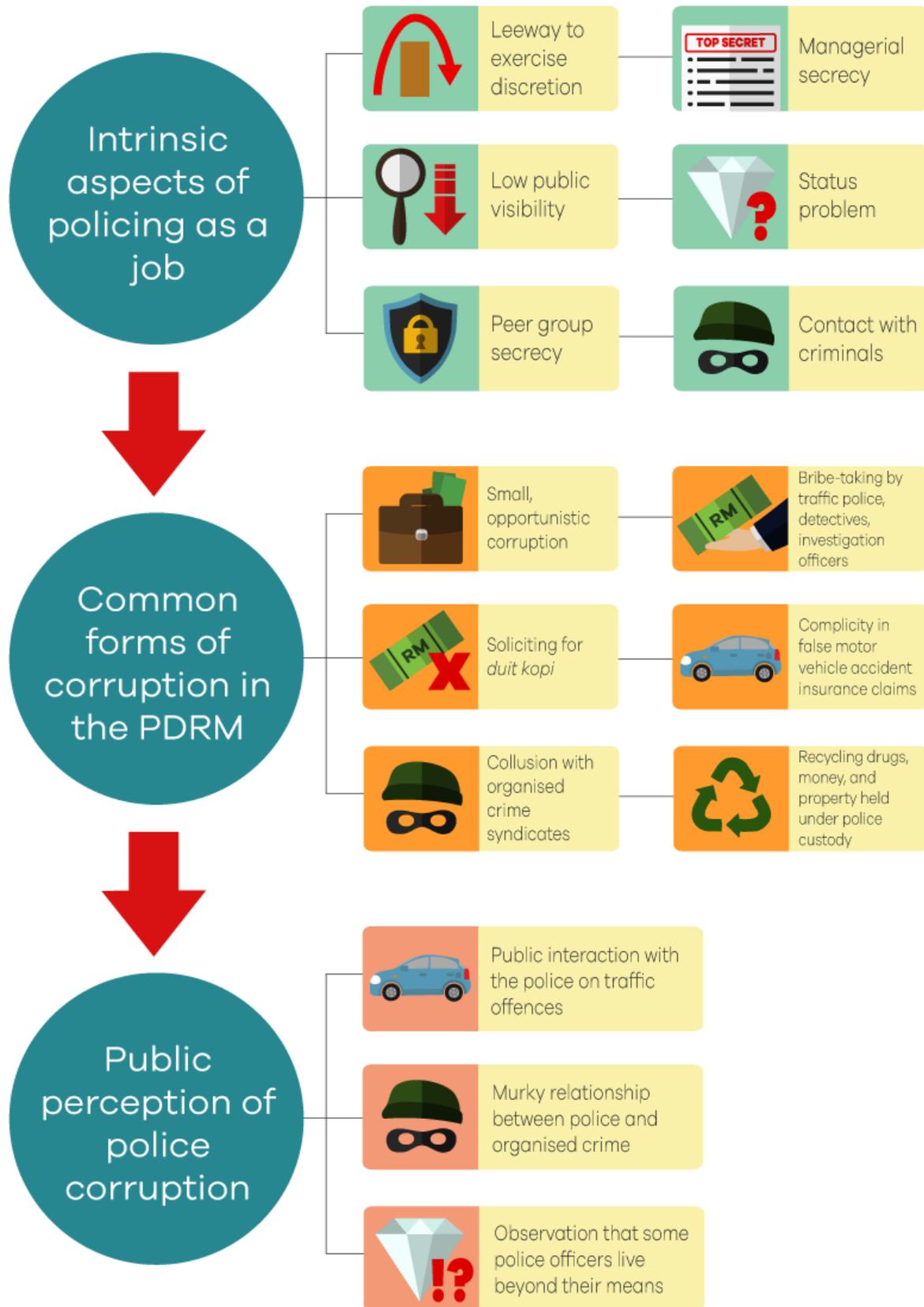


Figure 1: The causal funnel of public perception of police corruption. Constant factors faced by police officers while on duty affect the development of corrupt practices. Such corruption within the PDRM then catches the eye of the public, leading to widespread perception of police corruption.

2.8 In reality, the public perception of corruption in the PDRM is shaped largely by two unique sets of experiences. The first is rooted in the interaction of the public with the police during traffic-offence cases. Second is the public's bewilderment at organised crime activities such as illegal massage parlours, nightclubs and gambling dens, blatantly conducted in the open. We believe that both these experiences are the main causes of the public perception of corruption in the PDRM.

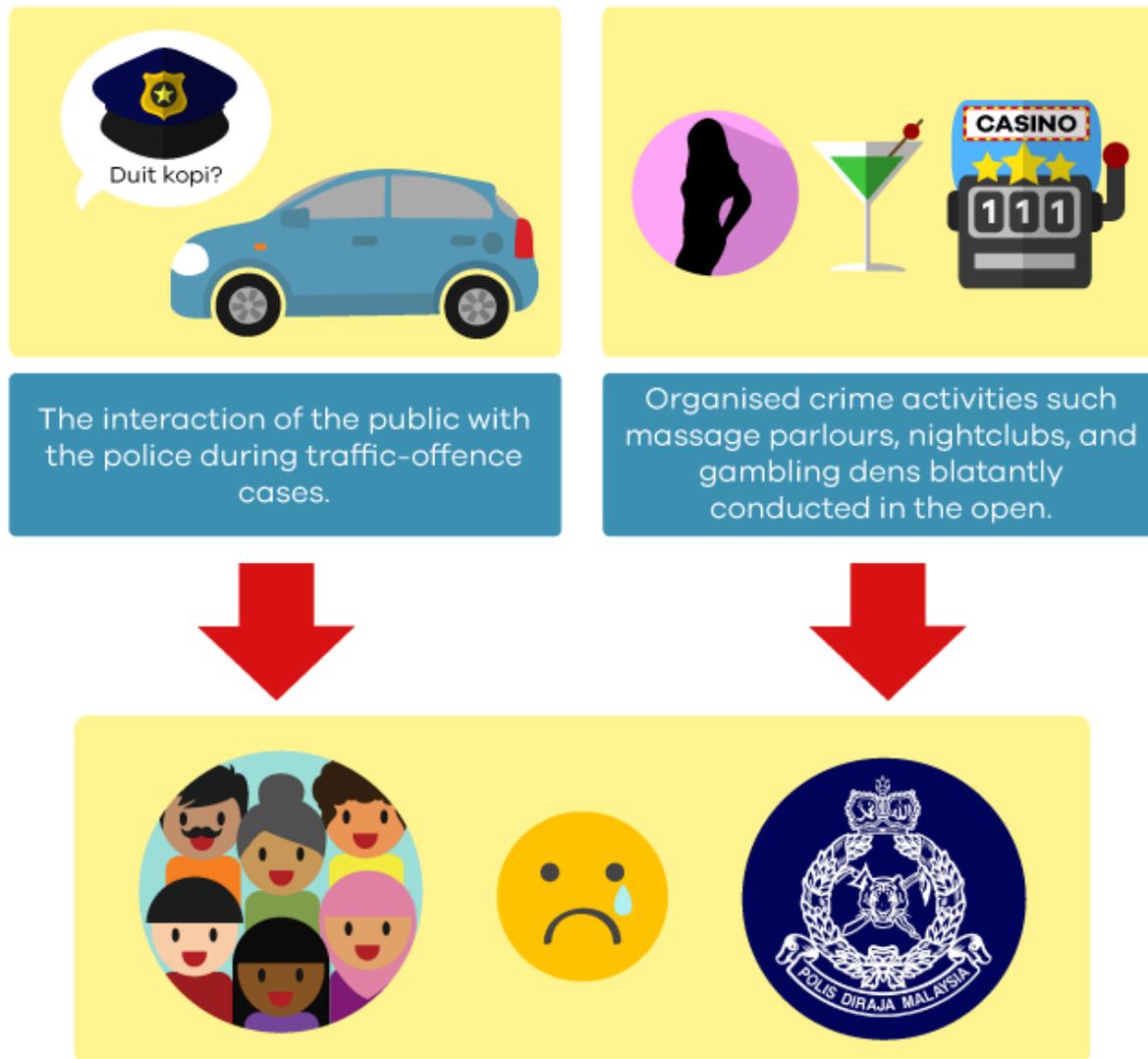


Figure 2: Two on-the-ground experiences that significantly contribute to the public perception of corruption in the PDRM.

2.9 This paper believes that if the PDRM can take steps to fully address these two areas, the perception of the PDRM will see vast improvements.

3.0 Hong Kong and Singapore

- 3.1 Hong Kong in the 1960s and 1970s was overrun by public-sector corruption, especially serious in the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF). The breaking point came in mid-1973, when Chief Police Superintendent Peter Godber, controlling assets of over HK\$4.3mil, fled Hong Kong while under investigation for alleged corruption. Following mass street protests, the Government established the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) in February 1974. Godber was eventually extradited, prosecuted, and imprisoned—a landmark case marking ICAC's commitment to fight corruption.⁷
- 3.2 Hong Kong has come a long way since the 1970s, ranking 18th of 168 countries surveyed in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index 2015.⁸ The HKPF was lauded as one of the cleanest and most professional police forces in the world by the Interpol Secretary-General in 2003.⁹
- 3.3 Corruption in the Singapore Police Force (SPF) was rife during the British colonial period owing to low salaries, ample opportunities for corruption, and ineffective anticorruption measures. Its watershed was the implication of some police officers in the Opium Hijacking scandal in October 1951. This triggered the establishment of the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB) in October 1952.¹⁰
- 3.4 In tandem with the CPIB and supported by political will, the SPF itself reduced police corruption significantly through improvement in salaries, working conditions, recruitment and selection procedures, training programmes, and members' socialisation.¹¹

⁷ Independent Commission Against Corruption, *About ICAC: Brief History*, 2016, http://www.icac.org.hk/en/about_icac/bh/index.html.

⁸ Transparency International, *Corruption by Country / Territory: Hong Kong*, 2016, <http://www.transparency.org/country#HKG>.

⁹ Independent Commission Against Corruption, *Building Up a Clean Police Force: the Hong Kong experience*, 2003, <http://www.icac.org.hk/en/acr/sa/bucpf/index.html>.

¹⁰ Jon S. T. Quah, 'Curbing police corruption in Singapore: lessons for other Asian countries', *Asian Education and Development Studies*, vol. 3, no. 3, 2014, pp. 192–196.

¹¹ Jon S. T. Quah, 'Preventing Police Corruption in Singapore: The Role of Recruitment, Training and Socialisation', *The Asia Pacific Journal of Public Administration*, vol. 28, no. 1, 2006, p. 66.

- 3.5 As a result, the SPF has succeeded in minimising corruption within its ranks.¹² Singapore is the world's eighth-least corrupt country and Asia's least corrupt based on the Corruption Perceptions Index 2015.¹³
- 3.6 We make comparisons between the HKPF, the SPF, and the PDRM as national police forces; and between the ICAC, the CPIB, and the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) as external anticorruption commissions. Evidently, the experiences of Hong Kong and Singapore contain lessons and practices that Malaysia can adapt and emulate for a cleaner and more respected PDRM.

4.0 Organised corruption

- 4.1 Systematic police corruption occurs when individual corruption events are duplicated regularly into arrangements.¹⁴
- 4.2 In Malaysia, there exists a perception that such arrangements exists especially when dealing with organised crime. Such crime largely falls under the purview of the Criminal Investigation Division's D7 branch for Secret Societies (Triads), Gambling, and Vice; or under the Narcotics Criminal Investigation Division for drug-related crimes.
- 4.3 In Malaysia, the most visible crime syndicates are involved in illegal massage parlours, nightclubs and gambling dens. Sometimes these activities merge into one: there are underground gambling dens that reportedly hire GROs to provide free sex to illegal gamblers.¹⁵
- 4.4 In order to maintain their very lucrative operations, these club owners may resort to bribing law enforcement regularly and/or upon being raided. These owners would be able to dish out large bribes amounting to several hundred thousand ringgit.

¹² Ibid., p. 59.

¹³ Transparency International, *Corruption by Country / Territory: Singapore*, 2016, <http://www.transparency.org/country#SGP>.

¹⁴ Newburn and Webb, pp. 23–24.

¹⁵ Catherine Robert, 'Guest Relation Officers in KL provide free sex to illegal gamblers', *The New Paper*, 31 July 2014, <http://www.tnp.sg/news/guest-relation-officers-kl-provide-free-sex-illegal-gamblers>.

4.5 Earlier, we explained that the perception of police corruption is based on public interaction with the police over traffic offences and also the public's bewilderment regarding blatant organised crime activities. Of the two, the organised crime problem is a much more serious systemic problem. In order to tackle this systemic problem, we need a two-pronged "carrot and stick" approach:

- (a) First, increase police salary to a level on par with a professional salary and that allows for honest living. We detail this in Section 5, and;
- (b) Second, further empower and make independent the MACC. We detail this in Section 6.

5.0 Improving the internal pay structure

5.1 Put bluntly, 'police aren't as likely to be fair and just when they're scrambling with criminal gangs for the same dirty money.' While 'poorly paid cops translate to bad police-community relations,' good pay is crucial to keeping police officers honest.¹⁶ Although stated in the context of New York policing, this concept rings true worldwide.

5.2 A key lesson from the Singaporean experience is to improve salaries and working conditions of the police to prevent corruption. Low salaries of the policemen, especially those in the lower ranks, was the most important cause of police corruption in colonial times.¹⁷ During the post-war period, corruption became a way of life for many Singaporeans to enable them to cope with their low salaries and rising inflation.¹⁸ In 1972, the government implemented the Lee Soo Ann Salary Review Committee's suggestion of 20–25% pay rises for junior police officers.¹⁹

¹⁶ W. Dizard, 'Good policing hinges on good police pay, reformers say', *Al Jazeera America*, 6 November 2015, <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/11/6/police-corruption-pay.html>.

¹⁷ Jon S. T. Quah, 'Curbing police corruption in Singapore: lessons for other Asian countries', p. 192.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 198.

5.3 **Table 1** compares how much first-year police officers are paid as a percentage of national median income in Hong Kong,^{20,21} Singapore,^{22,23} and Malaysia.^{24,25}

Country	Education level	Entry rank	Min. monthly salary		% of median income
Hong Kong	Secondary	Constable	HK\$22,419	RM12,826	149%
	Degree	Inspector	HK\$42,110	RM24,091	281%
Singapore	Secondary	Sergeant	S\$1,820	RM5,686	73%
	Degree	Inspector	S\$3,400	RM10,623	136%
Malaysia	Secondary	Constable (grade YA1)		RM1,014	63%
	Diploma	Sergeant (grade YA5)		RM1,711	107%
	Degree	Inspector (grade YA13)		RM2,329	145%

Table 1: Minimum monthly salaries of entry-level police ranks. Median monthly incomes are HK\$15,000 (Q2 2016) in Hong Kong, S\$2,500 (2015) in Singapore, and RM1,600 (2015) in Malaysia.

5.4 For secondary education qualifications (locally, the *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia*), Malaysian police officers are the least paid relative to the national median income (63% of the median), compared to their Hong Kong (149%) and Singaporean (73%) counterparts. Although inexcusable, it is unsurprising that a PDRM constable paid barely above the minimum wage of RM1,000²⁶ may resort to collecting *duit kopi*: if he/she receives RM20 in bribes a day for 20 days a month, the resulting RM400 would be almost 40% of his/her basic salary.

5.5 Degree-level holders earn a minimum of RM2,329 monthly upon entering the PDRM as inspectors. This is 145% of the national median income,

²⁰ Hong Kong Police Force, *Salary*, 2016, http://www.police.gov.hk/ppp_en/15_recruit/salary.html.

²¹ Census and Statistics Department Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, *Quarterly Report on General Household Survey: April to June 2016*, 2016, <http://www.statistics.gov.hk/pub/B10500012016QQ02B0100.pdf>.

²² Singapore Police Force, *Uniformed Careers*, 2016, http://morethanjustajob.spf.sg/#!uniformed_careers/content/6/1.

²³ Department of Statistics Singapore, *Key Household Income Trends, 2015, 2016*, https://www.singstat.gov.sg/docs/default-source/default-document-library/publications/publications_and_papers/household_income_and_expenditure/pp-s22.pdf.

²⁴ Suruhanjaya Perkhidmatan Awam, *Suruhanjaya Pasukan Polis*, 2016, <http://www.spa.gov.my/web/guest/deskripsi-tugas/spp>.

²⁵ Department of Statistics Malaysia, *Press Release: Salaries & Wages Survey Report, Malaysia, 2015, 2016*, <https://www.statistics.gov.my/dosm//index.php?r=column/pdfPrev&id=czRyNkIbDFyYXJFbU5YTUVj1V1BHHz09>.

²⁶ Attorney General's Chambers of Malaysia, *Federal Government Gazette: Minimum Wages Order 2016*, 2016, [http://www.mohr.gov.my/pdf/pua_20160429_P.U.%20\(A\)%20116%20-%20Perintah%20Gaji%20Minimum%202016.pdf](http://www.mohr.gov.my/pdf/pua_20160429_P.U.%20(A)%20116%20-%20Perintah%20Gaji%20Minimum%202016.pdf).

comparable to Singapore's 136% (S\$3,400) but far below Hong Kong's 281% (HK\$42,110) of their respective national medians. However, we must bear in mind that even dollar-to-dollar, Malaysia's national median income at RM1,600 is far below Singapore's at S\$2,500.

- 5.6 At the lowest ranks therefore, there is a case for increasing PDRM wages to a respectable level such that officers safeguarding our security are no longer driven to illegally pocket a little extra. The big question is: how much will it cost us to improve police pay and put a big dent to corruption?
- 5.7 According to the Malaysian List of Personnel in Ministries and Departments in the 2017 Federal Budget Estimates,²⁷ PDRM employed 141,411 staff in 2016. These comprise 125,984 uniformed officers and 15,427 public/administrative staff. PDRM staff are spread out among police contingents (i.e. states and Federal Territories), departments (e.g. the Strategic Resources and Technology Department), and more specialised duties (e.g. security control for the Royalty and for airports).
- 5.8 While we cannot strictly match Singaporean wages, we can at least aim for dollar-to-dollar equivalence. For example, a degree-level SPF inspector earns a minimum of S\$3,400 monthly, so a degree-level PDRM inspector who currently earns a minimum of RM2,328 monthly should receive a RM1,072 salary increase, or a 46% increase from his or her current salary. We use this dollar-to-dollar principle to guide our proposed salary increases for rank-and-file PDRM officers of ranks from Corporal to Sub-Inspector.
- 5.9 In tackling systemic corruption, and in particular regarding dealings with organised crime, we must also look into the pay of senior officers, i.e. those of ranks from Inspector to Inspector-General.
- 5.10 At the top of the hierarchy, Malaysia's Inspector-General of Police (IGP) earns between RM10,385.26 and RM16,285.76 a month, or around eight

²⁷ Malaysian Government, *Senarai Perjawatan Di Kementerian-kementerian Dan Jabatan-jabatan Dalam Anggaran Perbelanjaan Persekutuan 2017 Jilid 7*, Kuala Lumpur: Percetakan Nasional Malaysia Berhad, 2016.

times the national median; whereas his deputy earns RM8,596.86–RM13,464.42 a month.²⁸

- 5.11 Comparatively in Hong Kong, the highest grade of the pay scale, presumably corresponding to the highest rank of Commissioner of Police, is HK\$262,700–HK\$273,700 (RM150,290–RM156,583) a month.²⁹ This is an astounding ten times the pay of the Malaysian IGP. While we do not recommend a tenfold increase, we believe a fourfold increase for the IGP and gradually smaller increases down the senior ranks will be necessary to de-incentivise corrupt practices involving organised crime among senior officers.
- 5.12 To estimate the cost of our proposed salary increases for rank-and-file and senior PDRM officers, we first obtain the number of officers by rank from the List of Personnel. We then source their current average salaries from the Malaysian Government’s Services Circular No. 2, 2012 on salary increases for the PDRM service.³⁰ **Table 2** (page 16) presents the cost estimate for our proposal.
- 5.13 We estimate that our proposed salary increases will cost **RM2.55bil** a year to implement. This is an 37% increase from the Budget 2017 PDRM emoluments (from the current RM6.96bil to RM9.51bil); or a mere 0.97% of the RM262.8bil Budget 2017 federal expenditure. Our proposal will yield multiple times more in fiscal and social benefits.
- 5.14 On the fiscal side, total wastage in the Malaysian federal government’s annual expenditure is estimated to be at least 15.5%.³¹ We estimate the total annual government spending that may be exposed to corruption at RM156.5bil—i.e. total estimated federal expenditure for 2017 (RM262.8bil), minus emoluments (RM77.4bil) and national debt servicing

²⁸ Malaysian Government, *Pekeliling Perkhidmatan Bilangan 2 Tahun 2012: Kenaikan Gaji Bagi Perkhidmatan Polis Diraja Malaysia Di Bawah Sistem Saraan Malaysia*, 2012, <http://docs.jpa.gov.my/docs/pp/2012/pp022012.pdf>.

²⁹ Hong Kong Civil Service Bureau, *Police Pay Scale*, 2016, <http://www.csb.gov.hk/english/admin/pay/44.html>.

³⁰ Malaysian Government, *Pekeliling Perkhidmatan Bilangan 2 Tahun 2012: Kenaikan Gaji Bagi Perkhidmatan Polis Diraja Malaysia Di Bawah Sistem Saraan Malaysia*.

³¹ National Oversight & Whistleblowers (NOW), *Indeks Pembaziran Kerajaan NOW*, 2016, p. 65.

(RM28.9bil).³² We thus estimate losses to corruption and wastage in the Government's annual budget to be at **RM24.3bil**. Our proposal costing RM2.55bil is thus a worthwhile investment against corruption, which costs our country almost ten times as much, and potentially more. Besides such leakages in government spending, corruption stifles economic performance on the whole, whereas improvements in the corruption environment are mostly associated better fiscal performance.³³

- 5.15 Beyond corruption, our proposal brings social benefits both to the PDRM and to the public. Earning a respectable wage will disincentivise PDRM officers from soliciting bribes, whether for petty traffic offences or large-scale organised crime syndicates. On the other side, curbing police corruption will raise public confidence in the PDRM. Far from being seen as one of the most corrupt institutions in Malaysia, our men in blue will gain rightful public recognition and trust as they guard our safety. Paying them at appropriate rates to do so is simply the moral thing to do.

³² Ministry of Finance Malaysia, *Anggaran Perbelanjaan Persekutuan 2017*, 2016, http://www.treasury.gov.my/pdf/bajet/maklumat_bajet_kerajaan/2017/anggaran_perbelanjaan.pdf.

³³ Anna Kochanova, 'How does corruption affect economic growth?', *World Economic Forum*, 2017, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2015/05/how-does-corruption-affect-economic-growth/>.

Rank	Salary grade	Average salary (RM)	No. of officers	Increase by (%)	New average salary (RM)	Cost of increase per officer (RM)	Monthly cost (RM/month)	Annual cost (RM/year)
Inspector-General of Police (IGP)	VUYA3	13,336	1	300	53,342.04	40,006.53	40,006.53	480,078.36
Deputy Inspector-General of Police (DIG)	VUYA5	11,031	2	200	33,091.92	22,061.28	44,122.56	529,470.72
Commissioner of police (CP)	VUYA6	10,198	23	150	25,494.44	15,296.66	351,823.24	4,221,878.85
Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP)	VUYA7	9,356	41	70	15,904.70	6,548.99	268,508.73	3,222,104.80
Senior Assistant Commissioner of Police	YA24	7,786	124	60	12,457.62	4,671.61	579,279.14	6,951,349.73
Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP)	YA22	6,713	289	50	10,069.83	3,356.61	970,060.65	11,640,727.82
Superintendent of Police (SUPT)	YA20	5,974	573	50	8,960.99	2,987.00	1,711,549.57	20,538,594.81
Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP)	YA18	4,844	1,041	50	7,265.86	2,421.95	2,521,253.85	30,255,046.25
Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP)	YA16	4,194	3,201	50	6,291.03	2,097.01	6,712,529.01	80,550,348.12
Inspector (Insp)	YA13	4,031	8,531	45	5,845.42	1,814.10	15,476,048.71	185,712,584.53
Sub-Inspector (SI)	YA10, YT10, YP10	3,352	1,518	45	4,859.81	1,508.22	2,289,472.84	27,473,674.04
Sergeant Major (SM)	YA8, YT8, YP8	3,053	2,603	50	4,579.95	1,526.65	3,973,873.20	47,686,478.45
Sergeant Major (SM), Sergeant (Sgt), Constable	YA5/6/8, YT5/6/8, YP6	2,910	13,709	55	4,510.50	1,600.50	21,941,254.50	263,295,054.00
Constable (PC)	YA4, YT4, YP4	2,233	20,896	70	3,795.28	1,562.76	32,655,516.54	391,866,198.53
Corporal (Cpl), Lance Corporal (L/Cpl), Constable	YA1/2/4, YT1/2/4, YP1/2/4	2,093	73,432	80	3,766.91	1,674.18	122,938,679.49	1,475,264,153.86
TOTAL			125,984				212,473,978.57	2,549,687,742.85

Table 2: Estimated cost of our proposed increases to PDRM officers' salaries. PDRM salaries sourced from the Malaysian Government's Services Circular No. 2, 2012 on salary increases for the PDRM service. PDRM support officers (YT) and orang asli officers (YP) earn less than officers (YA) of equivalent ranks, but we combine both numbers and reference YA salaries to simplify the analysis.

6.0 Strengthening the external anticorruption commission

- 6.1 In Hong Kong, the ICAC adopts a three-pronged strategy of robust law enforcement, systemic prevention, and comprehensive community education.³⁴ It is an entirely independent commission separate from the police and any government department.³⁵
- 6.2 Likewise, Singapore's success with its CPIB demonstrates that a country cannot rely on the police to curb corruption as it 'would be like giving candy to a child.' Instead, 'a separate agency dedicated solely to the task of fighting corruption should be established to deal effectively with corruption in all government departments, including the police.'³⁶
- 6.3 An independent anticorruption commission and strong political will are key essentials alongside an independent judiciary and a responsive public service, to keep corruption in check. Using this simple formula, the Singapore government has seen a steady drop in the number of public sector corruption cases registered for investigation with the CPIB in the last three decades. In 2015, private-sector corruption cases stood at 89%, far outnumbering public-sector cases at 11%. Of the private-sector cases, 13% involved public-sector employees rejecting bribes offered by private individuals.³⁷
- 6.4 Compared to Singapore, government civil servants are neck on neck with private sector corruption. Our public-sector employees accounted for 47% of all MACC arrests in 2015.³⁸ In other words, a corruption case in Malaysia is thus four times more likely to involve a public-sector employee compared to Singapore.
- 6.5 Unlike the ICAC, the MACC is actually dependent on the executive branch

³⁴ Independent Commission Against Corruption, *About ICAC: Institutional Strength*, 2016, http://www.icac.org.hk/en/about_icac/is/index.html.

³⁵ Independent Commission Against Corruption, *About ICAC: Brief History*.

³⁶ Jon S. T. Quah, 'The Governance Brief: Best Practices for Curbing Corruption in Asia', ADB Governance and Regional Cooperation Division, Issue 11-2004, 2004, p. 2.

³⁷ The Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau, *Annual Report 2015*, 2016, https://www.cpi.gov.sg/sites/cpi/v2/files/CPIB_AnnualReport2015_.pdf, pp. 4–6.

³⁸ Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission, *Statistik Tangkapan Tahun 2015*, 2016, <http://www.sprm.gov.my/index.php/en/enforcement/statistics-on-arrests?id=1434>.

of government for its funding. Also unlike the ICAC, the MACC and does not have prosecution power and relies on the Malaysian Attorney-General Office. Recent events surrounding the 1Malaysia Development Board (1MDB) scandal clearly demonstrated the severe limitations of the MACC.

- 6.6 While any substantive effort against corruption will require across-the-board institutional reforms backed by political will, a low-hanging fruit is the open recruitment of MACC staff, especially of the MACC Commissioner.
- 6.7 The current arrangement of appointing the Commissioner on the advice of the Prime Minister casts serious doubt on the Commissioner's independence. Instead, the Commissioner should be vetted in a transparent process involving a parliamentary select committee. Meritocratic top-down recruitment of MACC staff must be enforced by a commission separate from the Public Services Commission, that is, the MACC itself must recruit its own staff rather than relying on the government.³⁹
- 6.8 The MACC's purview covers nationwide corruption generally. To target police corruption specifically, an essential recommendation by the 2005 Report of the Royal Commission to Enhance the Operation and Management of the Royal Malaysia Police is to form an Independent Police Complaints and Misconduct Commission (IPCMC) by an Act of Parliament.⁴⁰ This, and would mirror the Independent Police Complaints Council (IPCC) in Hong Kong.
- 6.9 As complement to the MACC, the IPCMC would focus exclusively on overseeing PDRM by receiving public complaints against police officers, and by preventing, detecting, and investigating corruption and other serious misconduct in PDRM. The IPCMC itself would have powers to obtain documents, issue search warrants, and summon witnesses. Such rigorous scrutiny would make PDRM more responsible, professional, and

³⁹ Institute for Democracy and Economic Affairs (IDEAS), *Boosting MACC Independence for Greater Public Confidence*, p. 3.

⁴⁰ Malaysian Government, Royal Commission to Enhance the Operation and Management of the Royal Malaysia Police, pp. 189–191.

accountable to the public.⁴¹

- 6.10 Since the 2005 recommendation for an IPCMC, and despite repeated calls by the Malaysian Bar Council, no action has been taken to date.⁴²

7.0 Watch out, you're on camera!

- 7.1 In view that political will is currently lacking for systemic overhaul of the PDRM's pay and on the MACC and IPCMC, the current regime can still consider at least tackling traffic-offence bribery.
- 7.2 In this section, we argue that the very least the government can do is to fully adopt vehicle mounted and body cameras in the fight against corruption at the traffic-offences level.
- 7.3 We note that the PDRM has trialled police cars fitted with video cameras. IGP Khalid Abdul Bakar remarked that the only challenge is finding enough funds to do it for the whole country.⁴³
- 7.4 Likewise, although body cameras have been introduced in PDRM in the last year or two, it has been on a limited basis.^{44, 45} For example, Special Branch officers and selected patrol units may be equipped with them.
- 7.5 We are cognisant of the potential costs of police body cameras, including purchase, maintenance, data storage, and employees. Based on the United States' experience, a body camera can cost approximately US\$3,250 per year to maintain.⁴⁶

⁴¹ IPCMC Coalition, *IPCCM: An Indispensable Part of Police Reform*, 2012, <http://www.suaram.net/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/IPCCM-English.pdf>.

⁴² Han Sean Ong, 'IPCCM no closer to being set up', *The Star Online*, 24 September 2015, <http://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2015/09/24/ipccm-no-closer-to-being-set-up-bar-chief-govt-still-thinks-eaic-is-enough/>.

⁴³ Jonathan James Tan, 'Police cars fitted with cameras being trialled – report', *paultan.org*, 22 May 2015, <http://paultan.org/2015/05/22/police-car-camera/>.

⁴⁴ Mohd Hilmi Hussin, 'PDRM Melaka guna 'body camera'', *Harian Metro*, 15 December 2015, <http://www.hmetro.com.my/node/100306>.

⁴⁵ Sinar Harian, *Polis terima enam kamera badan*, 28 January 2016, <http://www.sinarharian.com.my/ultras/liga-malaysia/polis-terima-enam-kamera-badan-1.478507>.

⁴⁶ Tad Vezner, 'St. Paul police warn of high costs for body cameras', *Twin Cities Pioneer Press*, 23 June 2016, <http://www.twincities.com/2016/06/23/st-paul-police-warn-of-high-costs-for-body-cameras/>.

- 7.6 However, we are confident that a lower-cost model is attainable. A basic body camera can be purchased online for approximately RM500 per unit. If we employ a rule of thumb of three times the unit cost to pay for the system, maintenance and analysis, then the operating budget per unit is estimated at RM2,000 per year.
- 7.7 We estimate the deployment of 6,000 units to be sufficient to cover all the traffic police activities for the entire country, based on the figure of 6,964 uniformed officers in the Traffic Investigation and Enforcement Department (of which 6,089 are rank-and-file officers).⁴⁷ The entire budget will not cost more than RM12mil a year. This RM12mil investment could potentially eliminate all bribery cases at the traffic level. As aforementioned, traffic-offence bribery is a major cause of poor public perception of the PDRM.
- 7.8 By substantially increasing the risk of getting caught in the act of bribery, video-recording will effectively discourage both officer and member of the public from engaging in bribery. Additionally, both parties will be empowered to lodge complaints against bribery attempts, backed by video evidence.

8.0 Conclusion

- 8.1 The steps proposed in this paper are, frankly, common sense. Tried-and-tested in Hong Kong and Singapore, we fully expect these best practices to improve the Malaysian public perception of police corruption, if adapted and implemented properly.
- 8.2 To recap, the necessary measures include:
- (a) Increasing officers' salaries to a respectable level guided by Hong Kong and Singaporean standards. We estimate our proposal to cost RM2.55bil annually;

⁴⁷ Malaysian Government, Senarai Perjawatan Di Kementerian-kementerian Dan Jabatan-jabatan Dalam Anggaran Perbelanjaan Persekutuan 2017 Jilid 7.

(b) Increasing the MACC's independence by revising its legal framework and hiring procedures. Establishing an IPCMC whose focus is purely on police-related corruption and misconduct; and

(c) Equipping officers with vehicle-mounted and body-worn video cameras.

8.3 Once implemented, continued vigilance is needed. Police corruption is part of a larger problem of corruption in government enforcement agencies. As such, necessary preconditions to implementing any anticorruption measures are political will and a favourable policy environment.⁴⁸

8.4 In short, 'perhaps the greatest obstacle to reforming a corrupt police department is the existence of a corrupt political environment.'⁴⁹ We call for all politicians to find the will to take the necessary steps to redeem policing back to its rightful place as a noble profession deserving public respect and gratitude.

⁴⁸ Quah, 'The Governance Brief: Best Practices for Curbing Corruption in Asia', p. 4.

⁴⁹ Newburn and Webb, p. 40.

9.0 References

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