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**21 SEPTEMBER 2016**

**MAN CHARGED FOR UNLICENSED AND UNREGISTERED  
ESTATE AGENCY WORK**

The Council for Estate Agencies (CEA) brought five charges in Court today against a 56-year-old Singaporean man, Shakir Khan, for allegedly conducting estate agency work without being licensed and registered by the CEA.

2. The Police had earlier charged Shakir with 15 counts of cheating, one count of forgery, and one count of theft in dwelling offence.

3. Shakir had been on the run for the past 10 years. In March this year, CEA officers discovered that Shakir could be conducting estate agency work illegally. CEA worked with the Police, which led to Shakir's arrest.

4. Under the Estate Agents Act (EAA)<sup>1</sup>, it is an offence for entities and/or individuals to act as estate agents and/or salespersons in any property transaction if they are not licensed or registered by the CEA.

**CEA's charges against Shakir Khan**

5. Shakir was charged in Court under the EAA for the following five charges:  
a) Three charges under Section 28(1)(b) of the EAA, for acting as an estate agent without first being licensed by the CEA; and

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<sup>1</sup> Under the Estate Agents Act (Cap. 95A), "estate agents" refer to estate agency businesses (sole-proprietors, partnerships, and companies) or individuals who do estate agency work. Estate agency businesses are commonly known as property agencies. "Salespersons" refer to individuals who perform estate agency work. They are commonly known as property agents.

- b) Two charges under Section 29(1)(a) of the EAA, for holding himself out as a salesperson of a licensed estate agent, HSR International Realtors Pte Ltd (HSR), without first being registered by the CEA.

### **CEA's allegations against Shakir**

6. In or around May 2012, Shakir facilitated the closing of a lease transaction for a Housing & Development Board (HDB) flat in Kallang. He arranged for the tenant to view the flat and also prepared the Letter of Intent using HSR's letterhead, even though he was not an agent with HSR.

7. On two occasions, Shakir assisted a tenant to renew his lease of a HDB flat in Bedok, the first time in August 2011 and again in August 2012. Shakir liaised with the landlord's agent, facilitated the tenant's renewal of the lease, and collected commission totalling \$2,600 from the tenant for the two renewals.

8. Sometime in or around September 2012, Shakir acted on behalf of the same tenant in the above Bedok flat and liaised with a landlord's agent to arrange for the viewing and prospective lease of a flat in Pasir Ris. The lease transaction did not go through when the landlord's agent discovered that Shakir was not a HSR agent and was not registered with CEA.

9. Sometime between January and February 2016, Shakir assisted another tenant to rent a flat in Ang Mo Kio. He introduced the tenant to the landlord, arranged and facilitated the lease of the property, and received commission of \$700. Details of these offences are in the **Annex**.

10. At all material times, Shakir was not an estate agent licensed by the CEA nor a registered property agent with the CEA.

11. The punishment for each offence under Section 28(1)(b) of the EAA is a fine not exceeding \$75,000 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years or both. The punishment for each offence under Section 29(1)(a) of the EAA is a fine not exceeding \$25,000 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months or both.

## **CEA officers' resourcefulness led to Shakir's arrest**

12. In 2012, CEA officers began investigating Shakir after receiving a complaint from one of his clients. Despite several attempts to trace Shakir's whereabouts, CEA officers were unable to locate him. Investigations revealed that Shakir was placed on the Police Gazette List (i.e. the Police's wanted persons list) in 2006 for cheating offences and he had been on the run since.

13. In February 2016, during a periodic review of the case, CEA discovered through a study of property advertisements that Shakir could be conducting illegal estate agency work. CEA then mounted an operation to ascertain if the agent was Shakir. It turned out to be the case. The Police were alerted and Shakir was arrested.

## **Advice to Consumers**

14. CEA advises consumers who choose to have a property agent to assist them in their property transactions to engage only property agencies and agents who are licensed and registered with the CEA. The public can verify whether an entity or individual is licensed or registered with the CEA via the [Public Register](#) on the CEA website.

15. The public can report those who perform unlicensed and unregistered estate agency work to the CEA at 1800-6432555 or [feedback@cea.gov.sg](mailto:feedback@cea.gov.sg). [Useful information](#) on engaging a professional and effective property agency and agent are also available on the CEA's website.

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## **About the Council for Estate Agencies**

The Council for Estate Agencies (CEA) is a statutory board established in 2010 under the Estate Agents Act to regulate and promote the development of a professional and trusted real estate agency industry. The key responsibilities of CEA are to license property agencies and register property agents, promote the integrity and competence of property agencies and property agents, and equip consumers with the necessary knowledge to make informed decisions in property transactions. For more information, please visit: [www.cea.gov.sg](http://www.cea.gov.sg).

**About the Offences**

**A) Lease of a HDB flat in Kallang area**

1. On or around 14 May 2012, Shakir met up with a flat owner who wanted to rent out his HDB flat in the Kallang area. The owner had responded to Shakir's advertisement in the "rent and sell" section of the Berita Harian newspaper. Shakir viewed the flat and said that it could fetch a monthly rental of \$2,200. He said he would arrange for potential tenants to view the unit.

2. A potential tenant contacted Shakir on the same day. Shakir introduced himself as 'Steve' and said he could help the tenant look for a place. He arranged for the prospective tenant to view the flat and facilitated the closing of the lease transaction for a one year period from 1 July 2012 onwards, at a monthly rent of \$1,500. Accordingly, Shakir prepared a Letter of Intent (LOI) for the lease for both the tenant and landlord to sign. The LOI was under HSR's letterhead, and when queried by the tenant, Shakir told the tenant that he was from HSR.

3. On or about 1 June 2012, the landlord tried to contact Shakir but could not get him. He then visited HSR's offices to look for Shakir as Shakir's name card stated that he was 'Steve S K' and an 'Associate Team Director' at HSR. The landlord then found out from HSR that Shakir was no longer an agent with HSR. HSR later arranged for another agent to complete the lease transaction.

**B) Renewal of Lease of a HDB flat in Bedok**

4. Sometime in September 2010 (before the CEA was established), a tenant engaged Shakir as his property agent to rent a HDB flat in Bedok for him and his family. The initial tenancy was for a year, from 1 October 2010 till 30 September 2011, at a monthly rent of \$2,400.

5. Sometime in August 2011, the landlord's agent contacted Shakir to ask if his client would like to renew the lease of the Bedok flat. Shakir assisted his client

to renew the lease for another year, from 1 October 2011 to 30 September 2012, at a monthly rent of \$2,800. Shakir received \$1,200 as commission. By that time, CEA was already formed<sup>2</sup>. Shakir did not inform the landlord's agent that he was no longer an agent with HSR nor a registered property agent with the CEA, and was therefore not allowed to perform estate agency work.

6. In August 2012, the landlord's agent contacted Shakir again to ask if his client would like to renew his lease of the flat. Shakir's client agreed to renew the lease for another year, from 1 October 2012 till 30 September 2013, at a monthly rental of \$3,000. Shakir received \$1,400 as commission.

### **C) Lease of a HDB flat in Pasir Ris**

7. In September 2012, the same tenant mentioned above instructed Shakir to help him look for another suitable residential property to rent before he renewed the lease of the Bedok flat stated above. This was in view of the rent increase for the Bedok flat. On or around 3 September 2012, Shakir brought the tenant and his wife to view a HDB flat in Pasir Ris. The landlord's agent informed Shakir's clients that the Pasir Ris flat was available for rent for two years, at a monthly rent of \$2,900.

8. Subsequently, Shakir informed the landlord's agent that his clients were interested to rent the Pasir Ris flat, but at a lower monthly rent of \$2,800. On or around 4 September 2012, the landlord's agent met Shakir and collected the rental deposit from him by way of cheque.

9. However, the landlord's agent became suspicious when she obtained Shakir's name card and noticed that it was different from other HSR name cards that she had come across, being a HSR agent herself. Shakir's CEA registration number was also not reflected on his name card. The landlord's agent then checked CEA's Public Register and discovered that Shakir was not registered with CEA. She immediately informed the landlord that the property could not be leased to Shakir's client.

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<sup>2</sup> The Council for Estate Agencies was formed on 22 October 2010.

**D) Lease of a HDB flat in Ang Mo Kio**

10. Sometime in June 2015, a homeowner engaged an agent from Tuba Real Estate to help her rent out her HDB flat in Ang Mo Kio. The homeowner understood that the agent worked with Shakir and another agent from ERA Realty Network Pte Ltd as a team. The three of them would share equally the commission earned from closing property transactions.

11. On or around 28 January 2016, a tenant responded to Shakir's advertisement on the Ang Mo Kio flat and arranged for a viewing on or around 11 February 2016. The tenant met Shakir and the other two agents. Shakir introduced himself as "Steve", and said that he was the tenant's agent. Shakir conducted the viewing and handled the negotiations with the tenant, who agreed to rent the Ang Mo Kio flat at a monthly rent of \$1,400, and paid \$700 to Shakir as commission. At all material times, the tenant was of the view that Shakir was his agent.