PP v Achraf Arjaouy
DAC 902335/2025

Brief Oral Remarks
(Sentence)

I have reviewed the submissions. These brief oral remarks address the main points. I turn first to the gravity of the offence. Any offence contravening s 3(1)(c) and punishable under s 4(1)(a) of the PHTA is innately serious. Such offences deeply violate the integrity of the victim, and the law provides that first offenders face a fine of up to $100,000 and imprisonment of up to 10 years, and up to 6 strokes of the cane. These cases do not come before the courts often – thankfully – and the reactions when one appears is understandably strong. However repugnant one may feel about such actions though, one must still approach the sentencing task with the measure of disciplined objectivity it requires; *logos* foremost rather than *pathos*. Without downplaying what this offender has done and the serious effects they have had on the complainant (identity redacted), the facts here do not indicate that the maximum penalty ought to be imposed, but they come close. This is evident when one acknowledges that not all the aggravating factors set out in section 4(2) PHTA, or even all the harm factors set out by The Honourable the Chief Justice in *Poh Boon Kiat v PP* [2014]4 SLR 892 are present here. I do not imply that all the factors must be present before the maximum penalty can be imposed. I only imply that when considered dispassionately in the scheme of possible offending, it becomes evident that this case ought to come close to the maximum.

2. The outcome in the case of *PP v BSR* [2019] SGHC 64 and affirmed by the Court of Appeal in *BSR v PP* [2020] SGCA 71 provides some useful support for that assessment. That case involved, amongst others, one charge under s 3(1)(a) PHTA against an offender who strayed so far from being a person of goodwill that he also saw nothing wrong in coercing his wife into prostitution through violence and abuse. An assessment had to be made as to the appropriate remediation required for such an offender and the Justices there did not arrive at the maximum penalty for that offence, affirming instead the sentence of 6 years' imprisonment, 3 strokes of the cane and a $6,000 fine for the charge. Amongst the differences between that case and the present, one stands critical: and that is in their respective pleas for what they have done and whether they have since taken responsibility for their actions. The courts have long indicated that litigation choices have consequences, no matter who you are – and that continues to be the case here even now. It might perhaps be easiest for this offender to understand it in the terms of this adapted quote: that those who want to do as they please, must bear the duty to accept the consequences.[1] Scaled appropriately given the offence, the facts and the plea, I impose a term of imprisonment of 8 years together with 6 strokes of the cane and a disgorgement fine of $9,000/- in default 6 weeks' imprisonment. This is a substantial aggregate, and in my judgment, it will serve the purposes of deterrence and retribution which are both primarily activated here.

[1] Adapted from P.J. O'Rourke.

3. The imprisonment sentence is backdated to the date of his arrest on 12 Nov 2024 so as to take into account the periods he spent in custody, but to exclude the period on bail. The record shows that he was on bail on 13 Nov 2024 until 14 Nov 2025 when bail was revoked.

Dated this 7th day of October, 2026.

EUGENE TEO WENG KUAN
DISTRICT JUDGE