

**BBC News**

**Singapore to deport 53 foreign workers over riot**

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**Singapore says it will deport 53 foreign workers for their involvement in the country's worst riot in more than 40 years.**

Another 28 face criminal charges for the riot, which broke out earlier this month in Singapore's Little India district.

The violent protests broke out after an Indian national was knocked down and killed by a bus.

The outbreak of public disorder is rare in strictly-governed Singapore.

The wealthy city-state depends heavily on foreign workers, with migrant labourers from South Asia dominating low-paid sectors like construction.

Many congregate in Little India on Sundays to shop, drink and socialise.

**'Right of appeal'**

The men facing deportation consisted of 52 Indian nationals and one Bangladeshi national, Police Commissioner Ng Joo Hee said.

Home Affairs Minister Teo Chee Hean said: "We have taken strong and decisive action to charge and to repatriate those who took part in the riot, to send a strong signal that we will not tolerate actions by anyone which threaten law and order in Singapore."

Those being deported failed to disperse despite police orders and "threatened public order, making their continued presence in Singapore undesirable", the Ministry of Home Affairs said in a statement on Tuesday.

Another 200 workers present at the riot are believed to have played a "relatively passive" role and will be given police advisories but allowed to stay in Singapore, the ministry said.

Law Minister K Shanmugam told reporters on Tuesday that under Singapore's Immigration Act, foreigners considered a threat to public security could be repatriated.

However, Human Rights Watch's Asia deputy director, Phil Robertson, urged greater "transparency" in the deportation decisions.

"It's an issue of due process," Mr Robertson told the BBC. "Singapore does have a policy of deport first and ask questions later."

"No one is excusing the people who used violence on that day... but in the case of the deportations it's not clear how the decision was taken, what evidence was brought against these people, or whether they had the opportunity to present their version of the story."

Activist group Workfair Singapore, which campaigns on labour conditions, said the "arbitrary deportation" without trial raised "grave concerns".

"The Controller of Work Passes should not have arbitrary powers to revoke work passes without the right of appeal, or the Police Commissioner to determine culpability," it said.

More than 18 people, mostly police officers, were injured in the riot on 8 December.

About 400 foreign workers took to the streets, hurling railings at police and torching police cars and an ambulance.

Last year, a strike by mainland Chinese bus drivers shone a spotlight on the low wages paid to some migrant workers and the conditions in which some live.

Four of the drivers, who complained they were paid less than their Singaporean counterparts and at the state of their employer-provided accommodation, were jailed.

Source: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-25426243>