The facts

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The ten accused, nine men and one woman, were born in Fujian province in China and had acquired the citizenship of other countries, among them Cambodia, Cyprus, Vanuatu, Turkey, Dominica and Saint Kitts and Nevis. They had settled in Singapore over the preceding years, several on employment passes issued to the companies they had set up.[1] Their wealth derived, according to the statements of facts to which they later pleaded guilty, from illegal remote gambling operations and scam syndicates targeting victims in China and elsewhere, run from the Philippines, Cambodia and other locations in South-East Asia. The proceeds were moved to Singapore through a combination of corporate accounts, personal accounts opened at private banks on the strength of fabricated source-of-wealth documents, property purchases and the acquisition of luxury goods.

The seized property illustrates the laundering channels. It included more than 150 properties, over 60 vehicles, bank accounts holding several hundred million dollars, cash in multiple currencies, gold bars, luxury watches, handbags and jewellery, wine, collectible figures and crypto assets. The crypto assets were a small fraction of the whole, reported at several tens of millions of Singapore dollars, but their presence was significant for two reasons. First, several of the accused held crypto on exchanges and in self-custodied wallets, so the police had to develop procedures for seizing and preserving private keys. Second, the predicate offences, online gambling and scams, are among the most crypto-intensive criminal activities in the region. The fiat wealth that reached Singapore's banks had in many cases passed through crypto at an earlier stage.[2]

All ten pleaded guilty between April and June 2024 to charges under the CDSA and the Penal Code 1871, chiefly for possessing or using benefits of criminal conduct and for forgery of documents used to open bank accounts. They were sentenced to between thirteen and seventeen months' imprisonment, forfeited the great majority of their seized assets to the state, and were deported on release with a prohibition on re-entry.[3] Seventeen further persons connected to the ring remained wanted. In 2024 and 2025 the authorities reached agreements with several of them under which they forfeited Singapore assets in exchange for the lifting of warrants.[4]

Notes

1. Charge sheets and statements of facts in Public Prosecutor v Su Wenqiang, Su Haijin, Wang Baosen, Su Baolin, Zhang Ruijin, Lin Baoying, Chen Qingyuan, Vang Shuiming, Wang Dehai and Su Jianfeng, State Courts, 2024; the accused's nationalities as reported in the Singapore Police Force release of 16 August 2023.

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2. Singapore Police Force statements on the composition of seized assets, August to October 2023, reporting cryptocurrencies among the seized property; Ministerial Statement of 3 October 2023.
3. Sentencing decisions of the State Courts, April to June 2024, in the ten prosecutions; the sentences ranged from 13 to 17 months' imprisonment, with forfeiture of between 90 and 100 per cent of the seized assets in each case.
4. Singapore Police Force and Attorney-General's Chambers statements, 2024–2025, on the forfeiture agreements with persons wanted in connection with the case who remained outside Singapore.

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