

## Malaysia

**Official name:** Federation of Malaysia

**Type of Government:** Federal parliamentary constitutional monarchy

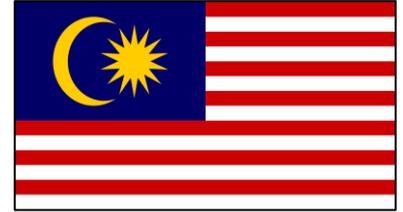
**Leader:** King Abdul Halim, Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak

**Capital City:** Kuala Lumpur

**Ideology:** Progressive but influenced heavily by Islamic beliefs

**Region:** Asia-Pacific (same as China and Australia)

**Neighbours:** Indonesia, Singapore, Brunei, Thailand



### DEMOGRAPHICS

- **Population:** 30.5 million approximately.
- **Religion:** 61.3% Islamic, 19.8% Buddhism, 9.2% Christian, 6.3% Hindu, 3.1% Other
- **Age:** 45.7% of the population is under 25
- **Ethnicities:** 50.1% Malay, 22.6% Chinese, 11.8% Indigenous, 6.7% Indian, 8.8% Other.
- **Language:** Malaysian.

### ECONOMY

- Since its independence, Malaysia has had one of the best economic records in Asia, with its GDP growing at an average of 6.5% per annum for almost 50 years. The economy has traditionally been fuelled by its natural resources, but is expanding in the sectors of science, tourism, commerce and medical tourism. Today, Malaysia has a newly industrialised market economy, ranked third largest in Southeast Asia and 29th largest in the world.
- Malaysia's economy in 2014-2015 was one of the most competitive in Asia, ranking 6th in Asia and 20th in the world, higher than countries like Australia, France and South Korea.

#### Exports

- Includes: semiconductors and electronic equipment, palm oil, petroleum and liquefied natural gas, wood and wood products, palm oil, rubber, textiles, chemicals, solar panels
- **Major Partners:** Singapore 13.6%, China 12.6%, Japan 11.8%, US 8.7%, Thailand 5.4%, Hong Kong 4.3%, India 4.2%, Australia 4.1%

#### Imports

- Import partners: China 16.5%, Japan 13%, US 8.5%, Saudi Arabia 7.1%, Australia 5%
- Imports include raw materials (which is why Australia is 5%) especially oil and steel.

### MILITARY

**Size:** The Malaysian Armed Forces have three branches, the Royal Malaysian Navy, the Malaysian Army, and the Royal Malaysian Air Force. There is no conscription, and the required age for voluntary military service is 18. The military uses 1.5% of the country's GDP, and employs 1.23% of Malaysia's manpower.

**Defence Arrangements:** Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand have agreed to host joint security force exercises to secure their maritime border and tackle issues such as illegal immigration and smuggling.

### POLITICS

## Domestic Politics

- Race is a significant force in politics, and many political parties are ethnically based. Many government policies provide preferential treatment to Malay citizens over immigrant citizens in employment, education, scholarships, business, and access to cheaper housing and assisted savings. This has generated interethnic resentment.
- There is ongoing debate over whether the laws and society of Malaysia should reflect secular or Islamic principles. Islamic criminal laws passed by the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party in state legislative assembly of Kelantan have been blocked by the federal government on the basis that criminal laws are the responsibility of the federal government.



## Foreign Policy Concerns

- Malaysia's foreign policy is officially based on the principle of neutrality and maintaining peaceful relations with all countries, regardless of their political system. The government attaches a high priority to the security and stability of Southeast Asia, and seeks to further develop relations with other countries in the region.
- Historically the government has tried to portray Malaysia as a progressive Islamic nation while strengthening relations with other Islamic states. A strong tenet of Malaysia's policy is national sovereignty and the right of a country to control its domestic affairs.
- The policy towards territorial disputes by the government is one of pragmatism, with the government solving disputes in a number of ways, such as bringing the case to the International Court of Justice. The Spratly Islands are disputed by many states in the area, and the entirety of the South China Sea is claimed by China. Nevertheless, unlike its neighbours of Vietnam and the Philippines, Malaysia has avoided any conflicts with China.
- Malaysia has never recognised Israel and has no diplomatic ties with it. It has remained a strong supporter of the State of Palestine, and has called for Israel to be taken to the International Criminal Court over the Gaza flotilla raid. Malaysian peacekeeping forces are present in Lebanon and have contributed to many other UN peacekeeping missions.
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### More Information

Wikipedia: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malaysia>

CIA: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/my.html>

BBC: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-15356257>

Latest news from the New York Times <http://www.nytimes.com/pages/world/asia/index.html>

the Economist <http://www.economist.com/news/world-week/21643226-politics-week>

the Guardian <http://www.theguardian.com/world/asia>