1870

1870
British colonial government begins bringing Chinese and Tamil laborers to the Malay peninsula to work in mines and rubber plantations.

1945
Sino-Malay race riots lead to an estimated 2,000 deaths.

1946
The Malayan Union, established by the British, grants citizenship to the country's Chinese and Indians. The United Malays National Organization (UMNO), founded that year, opposes it.

1948
The Federation of Malaya replaces the Malayan Union.

1955
The Alliance, an intercommunal coalition composed of the UMNO and Chinese and Indian parties, wins an election landslide. Later known as Barisan Nasional, the coalition has dominated Malaysian politics since.

1957
The Federation of Malaya achieves independence from the UK.

1963
The Federation of Malaysia is formed with Singapore and the Borneo states of Sabah and Sarawak.

1964
Tensions between the UMNO and Singapore's ethnic-Chinese-dominated People's Action Party (PAP) spark communal riots.

1965
Singapore exits the Federation of Malaysia.

1969
Following historic opposition electoral gains, the May 13 riots between ethnic Chinese and ethnic Malays kill at least 196.

1971
The New Economic Policy (NEP) is launched. It will succeed in reducing poverty, but entrench Malays' preferential status.

1981
Amid growing Malay nationalism, Mahathir Mohamad becomes prime minister, bringing rapid economic growth, but also authoritarianism.

1982
Young Islamic leader Anwar Ibrahim joins UMNO amid conflict between Mahathir and the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party (PAS).

1987
Operation Lalang jails 106 opposition politicians and activists under the Internal Security Act.

1997
The Asian financial crisis.

1998
Anwar, then deputy prime minister, is sacked over economic policy and put on trial for sodomy and corruption. Public outrage gives birth to the Reformasi movement.

2003
His coalition weakened by the Asian financial crisis and mounting opposition, Mahathir steps down.

2007
The Bersih ("Clean") movement demands free and fair elections.

2013
200 armed Filipinos from the Royal Sulu Sultanate Army invade a coastal village in Sabah.

2016
The fifth iteration of the Bersih protests, "Bersih 5.0," calls for the resignation of Prime Minister Najib Razak over the 1MDB corruption case.

2017

Malaysia

At a glance

National civil war
Absent

Communal/ideological conflict
Medium

National political conflict
Medium

Local political and electoral conflict
Low

Transnational terrorism
Medium

Local resource conflict
Low

Separatism and autonomy
Low

Urban crime and violence
Low

** Rankings are based on the last 15 years and are relative to other Asian countries.*

Overview

Politics in Malaysia have been shaped by ethnic and religious dynamics. In the years leading to independence and the decade that followed, growing economic disparities between ethnic Malays and the Chinese and Indian communities led to the emergence of political formations organized along communal lines. Simmering tensions culminated in race riots in May 1969, a watershed event that left a lasting mark on Malaysian politics. Barisan Nasional (National Front), a broad, intercommunal political coalition, remained continuously in power by safeguarding Malay political supremacy while at the same time introducing economic policies that benefited all. Under its rule, Malaysia experienced rapid growth and kept racial tensions in check. This, however, came at the cost of civic freedoms, as the Barisan Nasional government took a semiauthoritarian turn, using latent racial tensions to legitimate restrictions on democratic expression. The aftermath of the 1997 Asian financial crisis altered the political landscape. Divisions appeared within the ruling coalition over the sacking of Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, making room for an emboldened civil society to assert itself and demand civic freedoms, electoral reform and transparency. As the hegemony of the ruling coalition has increasingly been challenged, protests have often been met with arrests and police brutality. The continued use of communalism for political advantage raises the risk of violence in the future. Terrorist attacks on Malaysian soil have been relatively rare, but Malaysians have been involved in attacks elsewhere, and extremist views appear to be widespread in the country. Rates of local electoral violence, resource conflict, and criminal violence, however, are low compared to many countries in the region.

Malaysia

National level

National civil war

National civil war has not been present in Malaysia since independence.

National political conflict

Ethnic and religious communalism in large part define the Malaysian political landscape. Policies favoring ethnic Malays and other indigenous people, collectively known as *Bumiputera* (68.6 percent of the population[1]), are by and large accepted by the large Chinese and Indian communities (respectively 23.4 percent and 7 percent) as a trade-off for broad-based economic growth and stability. While these tensions have rarely escalated into violence since the 1969 riots, the threat of social unrest has been used to secure the support of minorities for the multiethnic Barisan Nasional political coalition, which has ruled Malaysia without interruption since independence. Since the 2000s, however, an emboldened civil society has increasingly challenged the status quo, as evidenced by the success of the *Bersih* movement. Demands for electoral reform and an end to corruption have mobilized citizens across communal divides.

Between 1870 and 1930, Chinese and Tamils were brought to the Malay peninsula in large numbers by the British colonial government to work as laborers in the mining industry and on rubber plantations. The British ruled through the feudal Malay Sultanate system. A minority of better-educated urban Malays were employed in the colonial administration, while rural Malays continued to live by subsistence farming. While Malays were subjects of the British Malaya state and benefited from customary land rights, free education, and other advantages, Chinese and Indians were considered temporary foreign residents. Nevertheless, exposure to the new economy of mining and large-scale planting improved the economic welfare of the Chinese and Indian populations. The former became dominant in trade, while Indians continued to work in plantations. The growing urban working class became largely composed of such "foreigners," with Malays increasingly lagging behind, leading to an increase in racial tensions. These erupted into violence during the Japanese occupation, when Malay anticolonial forces, trained and armed by the Japanese, fought antifascist forces armed by the British and composed mainly of Chinese. In 1945, Sino-Malay race riots led to an estimated 2,000 deaths.[2]

Following World War II, the short-lived Malayan Union, established by the British to prepare for independence, considerably reduced the power of the Sultans and granted citizenship and access to the civil service to Chinese and Indians. These provisions were met with vocal opposition from the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), which was established in 1946. This led to the replacement of the Malayan Union by the Federation of Malaya in 1948, which restored the authority of the Sultans under the British high commissioner.

Chinese and Indian demands for equal citizenship and educational and employment opportunities continued, however. The Chinese and Indian communities formed political parties—the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC) in 1946, and the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) in 1949—to gain political leverage to bargain for better status. At the same time, an insurgency, led by the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM), which was dominated by ethnic Chinese, erupted in 1948 (see the section on large-scale communal and ideological conflicts, below).

The MIC and MCA eventually rallied around the UMNO to form the Alliance (the forerunner of Barisan Nasional). The MIC and MCA's support for UMNO was based on a compromise

whereby minorities would support Malay preferential status in exchange for security and a tacit understanding that the government would not interfere in their economic affairs. The Alliance went on to win the 1955 elections by a landslide. The same coalition has dominated Malaysian politics without interruption to this day.

The Federation of Malaya achieved independence in 1957, and in 1963 became the Federation of Malaysia after integrating Singapore and the states of Sabah and Sarawak in northern Borneo. Lee Kuan Yew's People's Action Party (PAP) dominated Singapore, where Chinese are a large majority, from the 1959 elections onward, posing a political threat to UMNO at the federal level. Tensions between the two parties culminated in the 1964 communal riots, during which at least 22 people were killed and 454 injured.[3] Singapore was expelled from the Federation in 1965. In the rest of Malaysia, competition between the Alliance and a developing political opposition also resulted in racial violence. UMNO's control over the ethnic-Malay constituency was challenged by the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party (PAS), founded in 1951 by Muslim clerics in the rural and conservative north. Meanwhile, Chinese frustration over the MCA's performance led to the formation of the Democratic Action Party (DAP) in 1965, and the Malaysian People's Movement (Gerakan) in 1968, both of which campaigned for the abolition of Malay privileges.[4] Opposition parties made historic gains in the 1969 elections, inflicting a major setback on the Alliance, which failed for the first time to achieve the crucial two-thirds majority needed to pass constitutional amendments in the federal parliament. Following incidents during celebrations by DAP and Gerakan supporters, riots broke out on May 13, three days after the election. Chinese properties were looted, and at least 196 people, most of them Chinese, were killed.[5]

The riots led to a major shift in Malaysian politics, marked by the consolidation of Malay power and a long-lasting authoritarian turn. A state of national emergency was declared on May 14, and the parliament was suspended for two years. When it reconvened in 1971, it amended the 1948 Sedition Act to further suppress contestation of the preferential status of Bumiputera. The Alliance reformed as Barisan Nasional, integrating opposition parties such as PAS and Gerakan. The 1969 riots were also used to justify the launch of a New Economic Policy (NEP). The NEP was meant to foster interracial harmony by reducing poverty and eliminating the association of ethnic groups with specific economic activities. In practice, it included many affirmative action provisions to decrease the dependence of Bumiputera on subsistence agriculture and increase their representation in business, commerce, and salaried professions. Implemented from 1971 to 1990, the NEP achieved significant success, reducing the share of Malaysians living under the poverty line from 49.3 percent in 1970 to 16.3 percent in 1990.[6] It also resulted in greater representation of ethnic Malays in nonagricultural sectors, tertiary education, and the country's growing middle class. The NEP's effects on interracial harmony are more debatable, however, as it entrenched the preferential status of Bumiputera and fed resentment among ethnic minorities. Another effect of the 1969 riots was the growing influence of ultra-Malay nationalism, especially within the UMNO. This enabled the rise to power of the conservative politician Mahathir Mohamad, who became prime minister in 1981 and remained in that office for the next 22 years.

Under Mahathir rule, Malaysia became a relatively successful developmental state,[7] with state-led macroeconomic planning leading to rapid economic growth. This came at a cost, however. Democratic freedoms were curbed, and racial issues were frequently manipulated to mobilize the Malay vote, keep minorities in line, and suppress dissent. In a major crackdown, Operation Lalang, in 1987, 106 opposition politicians and civil society activists were arrested under the Internal Security Act (ISA) for allegedly inciting racial tensions.[8] The 1980s and '90s also witnessed the Islamization of the state in response to the political challenge posed by the Islamic PAS party, which had left the Barisan Nasional to return to the opposition in 1977.[9] Benefiting from a religious revival, fueled by global events such as the Arab-Israeli wars and the Iranian revolution, PAS challenged UMNO dominance within the ethnic-Malay community.[10] To undercut PAS, Mahathir groomed his own Islamic leader, the charismatic Anwar Ibrahim, and championed

policies supporting the establishment of Islamic courts, banks, universities, and medical centers and the progressive Islamization of the bureaucracy. In the 1990s, Mahathir took advantage of PAS's support for Sharia-inspired criminal punishments (*hudud* ordinances), and alleged links to local and Indonesian terror groups, to brand the political party as extremist.

The first decade of the 21st century was marked by the growth of a more vocal civil society and reform movement cutting across communal lines. During the Asian financial crisis (1997–1998), Anwar Ibrahim, then finance minister, was sacked over disagreements on economic recovery measures.[11] His subsequent trial for alleged sodomy and corruption was met with public outrage, transforming Mahathir's former protégé into the leader of a movement (Reformasi) that channeled the discontent of Malaysia's growing middle class. The Reformasi activists demanded genuine democratic representation, social justice, and an end to corruption. The movement's initial success was, however, short lived. A coalition formed by PAS, DAP, and Anwar Ibrahim's new party (later known as the People's Justice Party, PKR), collapsed amid disagreements between PAS and DAP about state-level Islamist policies implemented by PAS and demands from the Chinese community relayed by DAP. Only in 2007, four years after Mahathir stepped down, did the reform movement regain momentum with the establishment of the Coalition for Free and Fair Elections (Bersih, or "Clean"). Focusing on a practical set of simple demands regarding elections,[12] Bersih drew between 10,000 and 30,000 protestors into the streets in November 2007. During the following year's general election, Barisan Nasional lost its two-thirds majority for the first time since 1969. Anwar Ibrahim's PKR won five states out of 13 and formed the People's Alliance (Pakatan Rakyat) with PAS and DAP. Four more Bersih protests, in 2011, 2012, 2015, and 2016, attracted large multiracial crowds. Protests were often met with police brutality and arrests. In the 2013 general election, Barisan Nasional's majority in the federal parliament continued to shrink.[13] The 2016 "Bersih 5.0" protesters called for the resignation of current prime minister Najib Razak over his alleged involvement in the 1MDB corruption case.[14] To bolster support in the lead-up to the 2018 general election, Najib has allegedly been resorting to old communal tactics: he proposed to further Islamicize Malaysian law by adopting the same hudud punishments once promoted by PAS.[15] Within the opposition, communal divides also persist. Common demands regarding electoral reform and good governance bring together different constituencies. But fundamental differences over the preferential status of Bumiputera and the role of Islam in the state are bound to resurface.

Transnational terrorism

Malaysian volunteers have gone abroad to wage jihad, first with the Afghan mujahedeen and more recently with the Islamic State. Jihad returnees have contributed to the spread of extremist views within Malaysia.[16]

Although no precise number of Malaysians joining the Afghan jihad in the 1980s was documented, a USAID report estimated that around 300–400 fighters from Malaysia and Indonesia together were trained in Pakistan and Afghanistan as anti-Soviet mujahedeen.[17] In 1986, Malaysians returning from the jihad formed a clandestine "prayer group," Halaqah Pakindo, bringing together graduates of religious institutions in India, Pakistan, and Indonesia. The group was allegedly sponsored by PAS, and gave birth to other Malaysian radical organizations.[18] In 1995, Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia (the Malaysian Mujahideen Movement, KMM) was established by Zainon Ismail, an Afghan jihad veteran and a member of the PAS State Youth Committee in Kedah state.[19] KMM's goal was to overthrow Mahathir's government and create a regional Islamic state comprising Malaysia, Indonesia, and the southern parts of Thailand and the Philippines. The group was responsible for robberies, bombings, and the murder of government officials. High-profile incidents included the bombing of a Hindu temple in Kuala Lumpur in 2000 and the assassination of a state assemblyman in Penang who was believed to have persuaded Malay Muslim women to convert to Christianity.[20] KMM was closely linked with the Indonesian terror

group Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), which shares the same goal of a pan-Malay Islamic state, and which helped KMM reach out to militant groups in the Philippines as well as to al-Qaeda.[21] In 2001 and 2002, 14 members were arrested, and KMM was disbanded. However, some former KMM members were later found joining the Islamic State (IS).[22]

A Malaysian national, Noordin Mohammad Top, was the mastermind of some of the most high-profile JI attacks in Indonesia in the 2000s, such as the 2005 Bali attacks and the bombings in Jakarta of the JW Marriott Hotel (2003), the Australian Embassy (2004), and the JW Marriott and Ritz Carlton Hotels (2009).[23] Noordin was killed by Densus 88, the counterterrorism unit of the Indonesian police, during a raid in Central Java in 2009.

Following the rise of IS in Syria beginning in 2013, some Malaysians went abroad to join the jihad. The government's official count was 100 in 2015. A Malay-speaking IS combat unit, Katibah Nusantara, was formed in Syria, although a large majority of its members were Indonesian. The Soufan Group noted that the Malaysian state was more efficient at preventing the departure of combatants than neighboring Indonesia.[24] Between 2014 and 2016, the Malaysian police carried out multiple arrests of suspected militants preparing attacks in the country, and claimed to have foiled several plots.[25] A grenade attack on a bar frequented by expatriates in Puchong, Selangor, which injured eight people in June 2016, was the first claimed by IS in Malaysia. Fifteen suspects were arrested, two of whom were police officers. The perpetrators allegedly reported to Muhammad Wanndy Mohamed Jedi, a Syria-based IS leader and Malaysian national, who also ordered attacks on prominent Malaysians including Prime Minister Najib Razak.[26] Wanndy was killed in Syria in April 2017. The Soufan Group found that Malaysians arrested while trying to join IS tend to be less hardened and committed militants than their Indonesian counterparts.[27] However, the Pew Research Center found that 11 percent of Malaysians view IS favorably, the second-highest score globally (figure 1).

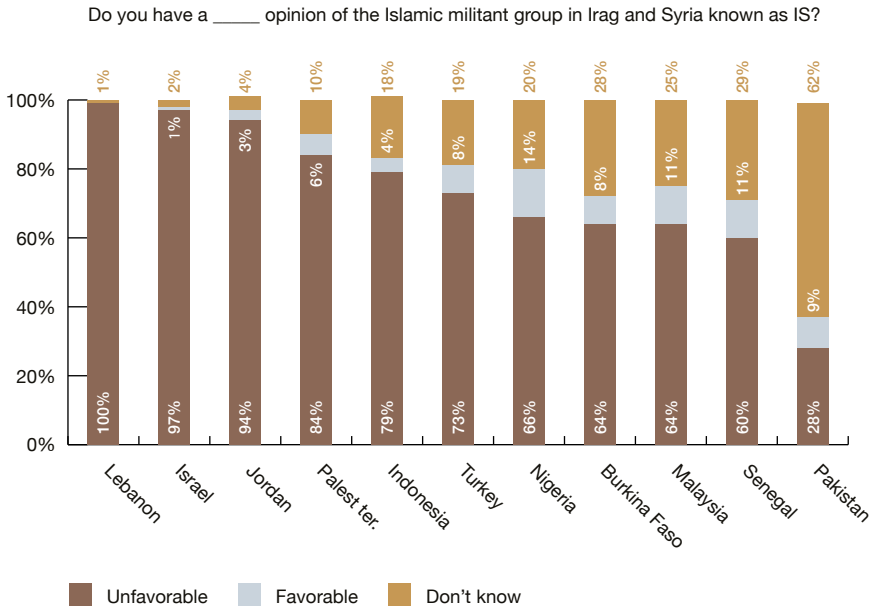

Figure 1. Views toward IS
Source: Pew Research Center[28]

Separatism and autonomy

The borders of Sabah, one of the two Malaysian states situated on the island of Borneo, have long been a bone of contention between Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines. In 2002, the International Court of Justice settled a territorial dispute between Indonesia and Malaysia over the Ligitan and Sipadan islands in favor of Malaysia. Both countries continue to claim sovereignty over the Ambalat continental shelf. Another dispute, with the Philippines, over northern Sabah has led to several eruptions of violence. In the 17th and 18th centuries, the region of Sabah was under the influence of the Sultanate of Sulu, based in the archipelago of the same name in the southern Philippines. It became a British protectorate in the 19th century and, after the Japanese occupation during World War II, a British colony and a founding member of the Federation of Malaysia in 1963. The Philippines claim Sabah on the basis that the sultan of Sulu only leased the territory to the British in 1878, while Malaysia considers that the people of Sabah exercised their right to self-determination in joining the Federation in 1963.

The Philippines at times has used military means to try to gain control of Sabah. In 1968, the government of President Ferdinand Marcos trained a special commando team of Muslim combatants, the Jabidah, to infiltrate Sabah, recruiting among the local Tausug[29] population and carrying out sabotage operations to destabilize the region and strengthen the Philippines' territorial claims. However, the operation failed and ended in tragedy, with the massacre of dozens of Jabidah trainees by the Philippine army on Corregidor Island.[30]

The dispute remained dormant until 2013, when over 200 armed men, identifying themselves as the Royal Sulu Sultanate Army, invaded the coastal village of Lahad Datu in Sabah by motorboat. The men were followers of Jamalul Kiram III, one of the claimants to the title of sultan of Sulu. The ensuing stand-off lasted over a month and escalated into military confrontation.[31] A total of 56 militants were killed, along with six civilians and 10 members of the Malaysian security forces.

In Sabah and in Sarawak, the other North Borneo Malaysian state, there have also been indigenous calls to separate from peninsular Malaysia. In 2014, a group called Sabah Sarawak Keluar Malaysia (Sabah Sarawak Leave Malaysia, SSKM) appeared on social media to demand independence for the two states. At the same time, a coalition of NGOs, politicians, and activists addressed a petition to the United Nations secretary general on the issue of self-determination.[32] Malaysian authorities declared the initiative unlawful, and charged SSKM members under the Sedition Act.[33]

Large-scale communal and ideological conflicts

Communal tensions have shaped Malaysian politics and society since independence (on this, refer to the national political conflict section, above).

Malaysia fought a domestic communist insurgency from 1948 to 1960—a first phase known as the Malayan Emergency—and then again from 1967 to 1989. The Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) was formed in 1930 to oppose colonial rule. It briefly received British support to fight the Japanese occupation during World War II, but started fighting the British after the war. Besides independence, the CPM also demanded equal rights for all inhabitants of Malaysia regardless of ethnicity. While the party was a multiethnic organization, its membership was predominantly Chinese. Its armed wing, the Malayan National Liberation Army (MNLA), recruited among ethnic Chinese "squatters," landless farmers in rural Malaysia.[34] In 1948, the colonial administration declared a state of emergency after the assassination of three European planters by the

11% of Malaysians **view IS** favorably, the 2nd highest score globally

communists in Perak. The ensuing guerilla war was characterized by acts of sabotage and attacks on rubber plantations, to which the British responded by relocating half a million rural Chinese into camps. In 1952, the MNLA assassinated the British high commissioner. Peace talks began in 1955 after Malaysia's first general election, along with an offer of amnesty for surrendering combatants. Although the talks were not successful, the liberation war waged by the CPM lost steam after Malaysia gained independence in 1957; the MNLA retreated to the Thai border, and the emergency was declared over in 1960.

The conflict killed an estimated 10,533 people, including 6,710 MNLA fighters and approximately 2,500 civilians.[35] It also served to justify repressive legislation that would be used to suppress peacetime contestation in the following decades, such as the Sedition Act and emergency regulations that formed the basis of the Internal Security Act of 1960.[36]

A second phase of the insurgency started in 1968, in parallel with the intensification of the Vietnam War and the 1969 ethnic riots in Kuala Lumpur. The MNLA launched attacks from their stronghold along the Thailand-Malaysia border. But insufficient foreign support, internal factionalism, and the insurgents' failure to mobilize national support beyond their ethnic-Chinese base led them to enter peace talks and eventually end the war in 1989, as the USSR collapsed.

Local level

Local political conflict and electoral violence

Election-related violence has not been as prevalent in Malaysia as in many other Southeast Asian countries. However, increased political competition between the ruling BN and the opposition Pakatan Rakyat, which made large gains in the 2008 election, resulted in frequent incidents prior to the 2013 general election.

Violent acts prior to the campaign period were limited to blocking access to meetings, stone and egg throwing, and destruction of property. However, when the official, two-week campaign period started in April, incidents became more violent. These included physical harassment of two men in Georgetown who held the opposition party flags, a bomb at a BN rally in northern Penang that injured a security guard, two petrol bombs at a BN office in Kuala Lumpur, and the

torching of two vehicles that belonged to the daughter of a candidate from the opposition Pakatan Rakyat in Klang. [37] Police reported 1,166 cases of election-related violence and intimidation in the first week of the campaign, and 43 arrests.[38]

Local conflict over resources and community rights

The land-development policy implemented in the 1970s as part of the NEP provided over one million acres of land on the peninsula to the poor and resettled more than 76,200 families from 1970 to 1980.[39] The program also contributed to economic development by increasing Malaysia's production of rubber and especially palm oil, of which it is now a major exporter. Over 200 plantations had opened as of 2014, with 103,156 registered settlers and more than 477,000 hectares of developed land. [40]

Land use for oil palm plantations, however, has been associated with environmental issues such as deforestation and biodiversity loss and the violation of customary indigenous land rights. In Sarawak, for example, the area planted with oil palm rose from 23,000 hectares in 1980 to more than one million hectares in 2013.[41] The Sarawak state government in the 1980s believed that poverty could be eradicated by providing both public lands and customary lands belonging to the indigenous Dayak population to outsiders and private companies for large-scale plantations.[42] Unsurprisingly, this led to land conflicts between oil palm companies and local communities. Cases of physical violence have included the shooting of a village headman in 1997,[43] a clash between villagers and gangsters hired by an oil palm company in 1999 that resulted in the deaths of seven gangsters, a clash between 200 natives and 100 armed men from an oil palm company in 2011,[44] and the 2016 murder of an indigenous and land rights activist, Bill Kayong, who had actively assisted communities in Sarawak to mobilize against logging by big oil palm and timber companies.[45]

Land conflict related to plantation development is also prevalent in peninsular Malaysia. Indigenous people (*orang asli*) have been vulnerable during land development, in part due to inconsistencies in the laws governing indigenous land ownership. Many do not possess legal documents that prove their ownership of the land, and are involuntarily relocated when the area they occupy is slated for development.[46] Deforestation resulting from land development also damages indigenous livelihoods. In 2016, an indigenous community set up blockades against developers in Balah Forest, which they claim as their customary land. Blockades were later taken down and dozens of locals detained by the police.[47]

Urban crimes and violence

Malaysia's criminal homicide rate was 1.9 deaths per 100,000 people in 2010, the latest year for which UNODC data is available.[48] Since then, the Malaysian government has released data showing its success in reducing the Crime Index under the Government Transformation Program (GTP), launched in January of that year. According to GTP data, there has been an average annual decline of 9 percent in the Crime Index, with a total reduction of 47 percent from 2010 to 2016. The Perception of Crime Indicator (PCI) showed that 61 percent of people in Kuala Lumpur in 2015 feared becoming victims of crime, a reduction from 80 percent in 2010.[49]

Despite relatively low homicide rates, gang violence in Malaysia is common. In 2013, the police published a list of 49 gangs, with around 40,000 members involved. Gangsters take part in many criminal activities, such as drug trafficking, armed robberies, loan-sharking, and contract killings. Gang recruitment targets schoolchildren and is generally carried out along ethnic lines,[50] with 70 percent of gang members reportedly ethnic Indians.[51] Twelve percent of members of these gangs are girls and women.[52]

1.9 deaths / 100,000

One of the lowest homicide rates in Asia

Domestic and gender-based violence

Gender-based violence in Malaysia is underreported, and few studies have been conducted. Baseline research in 2013, which used WHO questionnaires to study women's health and domestic violence against women across 13 states in western Malaysia, found that 8 percent of women had suffered violence by intimate partners.[53] Police records show a steady, recent increase in domestic violence cases: 3,173 cases were recorded in 2010, while 4,807 cases were recorded in 2014 (figure 2).

Transgender people are stigmatized by their families, communities, and government officials. They face employment discrimination and are vulnerable to violence, particularly due to the enactment of the Sharia Criminal Law, which penalizes same-sex conduct with sentences of up to three years imprisonment, although the law has rarely been enforced.[54] A report by Human Rights Watch addressed several cases related to sexual assault of transgender people by state authorities and discrimination related to cross-dressing. It cited an incident in 2014 in which at least 16 adult transwomen were arrested at a wedding and sentenced to seven days imprisonment. It also reported abuse by the state during arrest, custody, and imprisonment.[55]

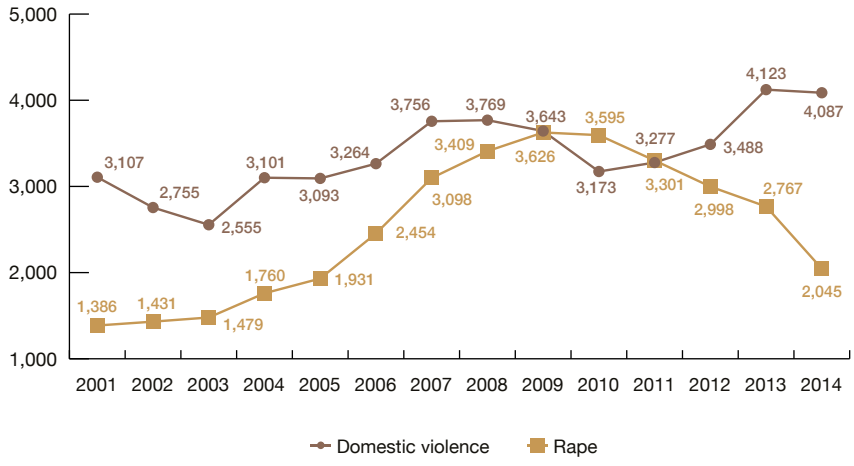

Figure 2. Domestic violence and rape cases (2001–2014)
Source: Royal Malaysia Police and Ministry of Women, Family, and Community Development[56]

Notes

1 "Current Population Estimates, Malaysia, 2014–2016," Malaysia Department of Statistics website, https://www.dosm.gov.my/v1/index.php?r=column/ctheme&menu_id=L0pheU43NWJwRWVSZklWdzQ4TlhUUT09&bul_id=OWlxdEVoYlJCSohUZzJyRUcvZEYxZz09.

2 Martin Vengadesan, "May 13, 1969: Truth and Reconciliation," *Sunday Star*, May 11, 2008, as reproduced on the Malaysian Bar website, accessed January 12, 2017, http://www.malaysianbar.org.my/news_features/may_13_1969_truth_and_reconciliation.html.

3 Adeline Low Hwee Cheng, "The Past in the Present: Memories of the 1964 'Racial Riots' in Singapore," *Asian Journal of Social Science* 29, no. 3 (2001): 431–455.

4 Both parties were multiethnic, but ethnic Chinese were dominant among members and cadres.

5 Unofficial sources provide much higher estimates, up to 800–1,000. See Vengadesan, "Truth and Reconciliation."

6 The measures and statistics used by the Malaysian government have been disputed, but few commentators deny that the policy had a significant effect on poverty. International Crisis Group (ICG), *Malaysia's Coming Election: Beyond Communalism?* Asia Report no. 235 (ICG, 2012), https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/malaysia/malaysia-s-coming-election-beyond-communalism.

7 Michael T. Rock, "Southeast Asia's Democratic Developmental States and Economic Growth," *Institutions and Economies* 7, no. 1, (2015): 29–34, http://ijie.um.edu.my/filebank/published_article/7498/IE15April3.pdf.

8 The pretext for the arrests was protests by Chinese politicians and activists over the hiring of non-Chinese-speakers as staff in Chinese-language schools. During Operation Lalang, the government also revoked the licenses of several opposition newspapers. Diane K. Mauzy and R. S. Milne, *Malaysian Politics Under Mahathir* (London: Routledge, 1999).

9 PAS fell out with UMNO over a political dispute in Kelantan, the home state of PAS president Asri Muda, where UMNO refused to back PAS in a motion of no confidence against the state's chief minister.

10 Jason P. Abbott and Sophie Gregorios-Pippas, "Islamization in Malaysia: Processes and Dynamics," *Contemporary Politics* 16, no. 2 (2010): 135–151.

11 Anwar and the central bank preferred high interest rates and austerity measures to control Malaysia's currency, while Mahathir preferred to increase government spending and lower rates. "Malaysia's deputy prime minister fired," *BBC News*, September 2, 1998, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/163200.stm.

12 These demands were: (a) clean-up of the electoral rolls, (b) use of indelible ink, (c) abolition of postal voting for the police and military, and (d) free and fair access to the media for all parties. Bersih 2.0 website, www.bersih.org.

13 Barisan Nasional's majority was secured with just 49 percent of the vote. See "Ruling coalition wins Malaysian election amid fraud allegations," *ABC News*, May 6, 2013, http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-05-06/an-barisan-wins-malaysia-election/4670904.

14 It was alleged that at least USD 700 million was siphoned from the 1Malaysia Development Berhad, a state-owned development fund, to accounts and foundations linked to Najib Razak. See, for example, Tom Wright, "Fund Controversy Threatens Malaysia's Leader," *Wall Street Journal*, June 18, 2015, https://www.wsj.com/articles/fund-controversy-threatens-malaysias-leader-1434681241?mod=e2fb.

15 Joseph Sipalan, "Malaysian PM voices support for Islamic laws as he seeks to bolster support," *Reuters*, November 29, 2016, http://www.reuters.com/article/us-malaysia-politics-idUSKBN13O0LO.

16 USAID, *Indonesian and Malaysian Support for the Islamic State* (South Arlington: USAID, 2016), http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2016/PBAAD863.pdf.

17 Ibid.

18 Mohd Kamarulnizam Abdullah, "Limiting The Threats of Ideological-Based Terror Groups: Lessons to be Learned from Malaysia?" in *International Seminar on Nuclear War and Planetary Emergencies–31st Session: The Cultural Planetary Emergency; Focus on Terrorism,* ed. Antonino Zichichi and Richard Ragaini (Singapore: World Scientific, 2004).

19 Most members of the group were also veterans of the Afghan war, and some were also PAS members. Kamarulnizam Abdullah, "Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia (KMM) and Jemaah Islamiyah (JI): The Links," *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism* 4, no. 1 (2009): 29–46, http://www.platformpk.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/mujahidin1.pdf.

20 Ibid.

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