

# American Foreign Policy Council

## MALAYSIA

### QUICK FACTS

Population: 30,949,962 (July 2016 est.)

Area: 329,847 sq km

Ethnic Groups: Malay 50.4%, Chinese 23.7%, Indigenous 11%, Indian 7.1%, other 7.8%

Religions: Muslim 60.4%, Buddhist 19.2%, Christian 9.1%, Hindu 6.3%, Confucianism, Taoism, other traditional Chinese religions 2.6%, other or unknown 1.5%, none 0.8%

Government Type: Constitutional monarchy

GDP (official exchange rate): S\$302.7 billion (2015 est.)

*Map and Quick Facts courtesy of the CIA World Factbook (January 2017)*

### OVERVIEW

*Malaysia has long been viewed as a developed, pro-Western and moderate Muslim-majority country. In recent decades, however, the country as a whole has been experiencing a swing toward Islamic conservatism. This shift appears to be gaining momentum, as evidenced by the increasing popularity of sharia law in public discourse, the state-sanctioned suppression of civil rights and liberties in the name of Islam, the inability of civil courts to stand up against controversial sharia court decisions, increasing cases of moral policing by Islamic religious authorities (including the policing of non-Muslims, in some instances), and more frequent references to the “Islamic state.”<sup>1</sup> This increasing visibility of Islam in Malaysian society and politics is driven not only by the Islamist opposition party Parti Islam Se-Malaysia (Islamic Party of Malaysia, or PAS), but also by the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), whose members were apparently the architects of Malaysia’s brand of progressive, moderate Islam.<sup>2</sup> Alternative actors such as non-governmental orga-*

*nizations (NGOs) and civil society groups likewise are increasingly participating in the politicization of Islam in Malaysia today, at times even eclipsing mainstream political parties in terms of intensity.*

*Islam in Malaysia is arguably fragmented and variegated in both substance and expression, with religious vocabulary and idioms being mobilized by the state, opposition forces, and a wide array of civil society groups. While Malaysian Islamists nominally operate within the boundaries of the country's mainstream political processes, they also work to define those boundaries. Moreover, even as the Muslim opposition attempts to shed its doctrinaire image in pursuit of an agenda of reform, the "moderate" UMNO-led government has pursued an agenda that has resulted in the constriction of the country's cultural and religious space.*

## ISLAMIST ACTIVITY

*PAS - Parti Se-Islam Malaysia (Pan Malaysian Islamic Party)*

PAS was established as the Pan Malaysian Islamic Party in 1951 by dissidents from UMNO's Bureau of Religious Affairs, and has participated in every Malaysian parliamentary election since 1955.<sup>3</sup> Since its inception, PAS has advocated for the promotion of Malay interests and the protection of Muslim rights. In its early days, PAS maintained a more rural constituency, particularly among ethnic Arabs and religiously-educated Malays.<sup>4</sup> By 1982, however, PAS's political stance was infused with Islamist aspirations. During this time, old-guard ethno-nationalists were voted out via party elections and replaced by *ulama* (religious scholars) leadership. This transformation coincided with burgeoning sentiments among Malay-Muslims that Islam is *addin* (a way of life), and had to be accorded greater prominence not only in their personal lives, but in the public sphere as well.<sup>5</sup>

The global resurgence of Islamic consciousness during the 1970s and early 1980s, coupled with the religious leadership epitomized by the likes of Fadzil Noor, Abdul Hadi Awang and Nakhaie Ahmad, contributed to the party's pronounced Islamic agenda.<sup>6</sup> The result has been a public battle between PAS and UMNO that hinges on the discourse of morality, with PAS admonishing UMNO for marginalizing the position of Islamic laws and the political leadership's failure to observe Islamic ethics and morals. From the outset, the party's goal was a *sharia*-based state in which economic, political and social systems conformed to Islamic values.

While PAS's commitment to its religious agenda had in the past prevented the party from fruitful cooperation with secular opposition allies,<sup>7</sup> a steady expansion of PAS's support base in states such as Terengganu, Kedah and Perlis and in the universities throughout the country in the 1990s indicated the party's rising popularity and the appeal of *sharia*-centered politics. The party's outlook is buttressed by its unyielding belief that the creation of an Islamic state is both a viable and necessary alternative

to the UMNO-dominated secular state. Since 1990, when it was returned to power in the state of Kelantan, PAS has presented draft proposals to the parliament for the introduction of *hudud* criminal law in Kelantan.<sup>8</sup> Similar efforts were made after the PAS electoral triumph in Terengganu in 1999. However, as criminal law falls under the jurisdiction of the federal and not the *sharia* courts, the motions were withdrawn on both occasions.

A turning point in the party's Islamic-state agenda came in the run-up to the March 2008 elections. Given the party's dismal showing in the 2004 elections, PAS leaders promised to soften the party's stance on the Islamic-state issue.<sup>9</sup> Ex-deputy prime minister of Malaysia and current PKR adviser Anwar Ibrahim echoed this shift, claiming: "PAS's intention to establish an Islamic state is no longer an issue."<sup>10</sup> In the 2008 election, PAS distanced itself from the Islamic-state objective and attempted to leverage the disenfranchisement of Malaysia's ethnic minorities in the wake of UMNO's rallying call of Malay primacy.<sup>11</sup>

In an obvious effort to woo non-Muslim votes, PAS leaders made clear that their campaign at the national level would focus on a manifesto that holds out the promise of a welfare state system, known as "*negara kebajikan*," accessible to all Malaysians.<sup>12</sup> Components of this agenda included populist initiatives such as free education, free water utilities throughout the country, cheaper fuel and health subsidies.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, wealth and income distribution would be pursued through a taxation policy that targeted revenue from large businesses in order to offset subsidies earmarked for the poor.<sup>14</sup> Not only was the welfare-state concept intended to dull the edges of its Islamist agenda, the PAS hoped it would enhance the appeal of the party across the electorate, particularly since specific reference had also been made to issues of meritocracy and the importance of the presence of non-Malay ministers.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, these were all important developments in ensuring non-Muslim support for PAS in the 2008 elections, in which the party made considerable gains and raised its total number of seats in the National Parliament from 7 to 23. In a continuation of this trajectory, the party also created a non-Muslim wing in 2010, and planned to field non-Muslim candidates in mixed seats during the next election.

PAS fulfilled its promise and fielded non-Muslim candidates during the 2013 general elections.<sup>16</sup> When the election took place on May 5, 2013, the incumbent coalition *Barisan Nasional* (BN), led by incumbent Prime Minister Najib Razak, maintained a majority in Parliament despite a resurgence of the opposition. In protest, *Pakatan Rakyat* (PR), the minority coalition of which PAS is a part, demonstrated against the election results. Although the PR coalition's other constituent parties—the secular Democratic Action Party (DAP) and the moderate PKR—agitated on the basis of electoral malfeasance, the PAS took the opportunity to advocate for an Islamic state, and rumors of a possible "Malaysian Arab Spring" have since circulated among opposition leaders.<sup>17</sup>

Within PAS, rumblings of dissatisfaction over the party's less than stellar electoral performance began to grow. It had not gone unnoticed by some PAS leaders that the party was defeated in areas with a Malay-majority populace. The party has since lost two seats of the 23 it won in 2008. Some PAS leaders later attributed the decline in the party's popularity among its core Malay base to its support for the dismantling of longstanding race-based affirmative action policies.<sup>18</sup>

At the PAS *muktamar* (annual congress) held at the end of 2013, the gulf between those who wished to return to a more conservative religious stance and the progressives who wished to continue building on inclusive political engagement widened considerably. Although several conservatives were voted into PAS's central committee at the 2013 *muktamar*, the overall make-up of the party did not change. As such, despite resentments held by a sizeable segment within PAS, the party nevertheless remained with the PR coalition.<sup>19</sup>

However, by 2015, PAS conservatives had actively renewed its *hudud* implementation agenda, with the PAS-dominated Kelantan state assembly unanimously passing amendments to the Syariah Criminal Code that would approve *hudud*.<sup>20</sup> Inevitably, this move met with strong condemnation from its coalition allies, DAP and PKR. After PAS leadership was firmly secured by the conservatives at the 2015 *muktamar*, PAS severed its ties with PR. Several months later, the progressive faction, which was sidelined within PAS, split to form a new political party, the *Parti Amanah Negara*.

PAS's strategy of cooperation with the secular-oriented opposition coalition did not result in further electoral gains in 2013, and this likely provided the impetus for conservatives within the party to re-establish their dominance. Since then, PAS has redoubled its efforts to pursue the implementation of its *hudud* agenda. In 2016, PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang succeeded in having his Private Member's Bill, on amendments that would increase the penalties meted out under the Syariah Courts (Criminal Jurisdiction) Act, tabled in Parliament.

### *Radical Salafi groups*

Malaysia is home to a pair of notable radical Islamist groups who adhere broadly to the exclusionary Salafi strain of political Islam:

The KMM (*Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia/Kumpulan Militan Malaysia*, or Malaysian Mujahidin Group/Malaysian Militant Group), an alleged underground militant group, was uncovered as a result of its attempted bombing of a shopping mall in Jakarta in August 2001. The group is reported to favor the overthrow of the Malaysian government and the creation of a regional Islamic state.<sup>21</sup>

KMM differs from other militant organizations in Malaysia in terms of its reach. Though established in Malaysia, several sources have indicated that KMM enjoys close links with *Jemaah Islamiyah* in Indonesia.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, the exact nature of this

relationship remains murky. Despite inconclusive evidence, Malaysian intelligence sources also revealed that KMM allegedly participated in religiously inspired riots in Maluku and Ambon in 2000, and supplied arms to radical Muslims involved in those incidents.<sup>23</sup> Subsequent arrests found leaders having in their possession “documents on guerrilla warfare and map reading, along with studies of militant groups in the Philippines, Chechnya, Afghanistan and Indonesia.”<sup>24</sup> In response, Malaysian security forces launched a nationwide operation to detain remaining KMM members. Eventually, up to seventy KMM members were detained without trial under the ISA (Internal Security Act) for allegedly trying to overthrow the government through violent means in the name of *jihad*.<sup>25</sup> Most of the detained members have since been released and the organization has been outlawed.

*Al-Maunah* (Brotherhood of Inner Power) was a non-governmental organization involved in the teaching of martial arts, particularly the development of one’s inner powers and the practice of Islamic traditional medicine. At its most prolific, it was said to have more than 1,000 members in Malaysia and overseas, particularly in Tripoli, Libya.<sup>26</sup>

In June 2000, the *Al-Maunah* movement managed to successfully carry out an arms heist from two Malaysian Armed Forces military camps in Perak. The heist served as a major source of embarrassment for the government, given that the members of the group managed to penetrate the camp’s security infrastructure by dressing up in military fatigues and driving jeeps painted in camouflage green, indicating the likelihood that the heist was an inside job.<sup>27</sup> According to police reports, the group had at least several hundred members led by a former army corporal, Mohammad Amin Razali. Several other sources revealed that civil servants, security services personnel, and even some UMNO members numbered among its ranks.<sup>28</sup> Upon ascertaining *Al-Maunah*’s responsibility for the arms heist, Malaysian security forces embarked on a high-profile operation against the organization’s camp in Sauk, Perak in July 2000 where nineteen members were eventually captured. Apprehended members of *Al-Maunah* were subsequently charged with treason and plotting to overthrow the government, with the intention of establishing an Islamic state. *Al-Maunah* no longer exists.

It is important to note that both KMM and *Al-Maunah* cite local issues as the primary causes of their grievances, pursuing a predominantly domestic political agenda. For example, the *Al-Maunah* perpetrators demanded the resignation of Prime Minister Mahathir and his cabinet, while in the case of the KMM, its three key objectives—“to seek religious purity among Malay-Muslims”, “to ensure that PAS’ political struggle was maintained and encouraged”, and “to implement *shari’a* within Malaysia”—all pertained to domestic political concerns, despite efforts on the part of the government to link them to a transnational terrorist agenda.<sup>29</sup>

Additionally, evidence linking these militant movements with external organizations remains nebulous and inconclusive. Although these domestic movements share some

degree of ideological affinity as well as rudimentary contacts with external organizations, they are purportedly not controlled by any outside group.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, despite attempts to associate KMM with external groups and regional objectives such as the grandiose vision of a *Darul Islam Nusantara* in the region, no mention was made about links with either *Jemaah Islamiyah* or Al-Qaeda in the formal charges leveled against the organization. KMM was charged under the Internal Security Act (ISA) solely for its attempt to overthrow the government.<sup>31</sup>

In recent years, a growing concern for the influence of the Islamic State's (ISIS) ideology has enveloped Malaysia. Unlike in Indonesia and the Philippines, however, where pro-ISIS sentiments have coalesced around existing extremist groups, in Malaysia the phenomenon has mostly taken the form of self-radicalized individuals, most of whom have had little to no prior affiliation with any extremist groups. On June 28, 2016, a grenade was tossed into the Movida Restaurant and Bar in Puchong, Selangor state, in Malaysia. The perpetrators of the attack were arrested several days later and upon investigations, it was revealed that they had received instructions from Muhammad Wanndy Muhammad Jedi, a Malaysian *jihadi* believed to be based in Syria fighting with ISIS.<sup>32</sup>

## ISLAMISM AND SOCIETY

Muslims constitute some 60 percent of the Malaysian population, with Buddhists accounting for nearly 20 percent, Christians nearly 10 percent, and Hindus just over 6 percent. Malaysian society on the whole has been experiencing a swing toward Islamic conservatism. This swing seems to be gaining momentum, as demonstrated by the increasing popularity of *sharia* in public discourse, state-sanctioned curtailment of civil rights and liberties in the name of Islam, the incapacity of civil courts to challenge controversial *sharia* court decisions, increasing incidences of moral policing by Islamic religious authorities (including policing of non-Muslims in some instances), and the alarming regularity of references to an “Islamic state.”

With the changing complexion of PAS, and the UMNO-led government's systematic Islamization of the bureaucracy, social consciousness and political discourse in Malaysia has assumed a much more religious dimension. This has resulted in an intensification of the UMNO–PAS competition where the focus is on linking credibility and legitimacy to Islam. However there is also a concurrent Islamic discourse rooted in an increasingly vibrant civil society that encompasses NGOs as well as alternative expressions of Islamic consciousness (namely, alternative media sources beyond the mainstream government-controlled channels). Even as the heavily contested politics of UMNO and PAS began to converge, a parallel form of civic activism was emerging, which has brought together not just political parties but also professional, civil society, educational, and religious institutions.

NGO activism in Malaysia generally peaks during periods of major social upheaval in this otherwise comparatively peaceful sociocultural environment. Recently, the issues of apostasy, religious freedom, and the sanctity of the *sharia* have spurred a round of NGO political activism that has challenged the hegemony of the state along with the policies of the opposition PAS. Muslim and non-Muslim groups that extend across the political spectrum have, in their own way, spoken for and against the positions and policies of UMNO and PAS, at times compelling these mainstream political parties to negotiate their politics and recalibrate their narratives.

Islamic NGOs and civil society organizations are not the sole challengers of the religio-political agenda of both UMNO and PAS. Considering the demographic realities of Malaysia, any debate on Islamism elicits responses from the non-Muslim community as well. In recent times, non-Muslims have voiced concerns over their place in Malaysian society, and their ability to hedge against the intensification of Islamist discourse and its increasingly hegemonic nature.

The Malaysian Consultative Council for Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, and Sikhism (MCCBCHS) is an example of a non-Muslim interfaith organization that seeks to enhance dialogue and cooperation, not only among Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, and Sikhs, but also between these communities and Muslims in Malaysia. Since 2001, the MCCBCHS has been leading an effort driven by the non-Muslim community to establish an Inter-Religious Council (IRC) that would encourage dialogue across religious boundaries. In particular, the MCCBCHS felt that the “proper procedures” regarding marriage, divorce, and child custody issues relating to converts to Islam required clarification from Islamic clerics.<sup>33</sup> The group believed that there were “several gray areas in this matter, which has caused much emotional suffering and confusion for family members of converts,” aside from the tension it placed on intercommunal relations.<sup>34</sup>

In Malaysia, civil society groups represent popular discourse in its most organized and mobilized form. Conversely, cyberspace and various alternative media sources are the new outlets and pathways of political expression that take Islamist debates deeper into Malaysian society.<sup>35</sup> Controversies related to various judicial rulings on the matter of apostasy, declarations by Malay-Muslim political leaders that Malaysia is an Islamic state, and the government’s apparent intolerance for open discussions on the “sensitive” issue of Malay-Muslim rights and primacy, have highlighted the increasingly vital role these new forms of expression play on the Malaysian political scene. They can both provide a forum for contrarian views, or for support of the government’s policies couched as a defense of the faith. Weblogs (henceforth referred to as blogs), chat rooms, and listservs have been shown to contribute to the shaping and constraining of larger political debate.

It is important to note that some of the most intense national debates spanning a range of issues at the heart of the rise of Islamism in Malaysia—namely apostasy,

Islamic governance and government, the sanctity of the constitution and of *sharia* law—are taking place not in the sphere of mainstream partisan politics but in cyberspace among ordinary citizens. This situation points to how Malaysian society is polarized over the question of Islam’s salience as an ordering principle for law and politics.

There is a noticeable schism between the opinions and perspectives found on Malay-language blogs and English-language blogs regarding Islamic state declarations and high-profile *murtaad* (apostasy) cases. While individuals from a variety of ethnic and religious backgrounds comfortably indulge in English-language blogs, Malay-language blogs seem largely monopolized by Malay-Muslims.<sup>36</sup> Another discernible trend is that, regardless of ethnicity and religion, there is a general consensus on English-language blogs in relation to the status of Malaysia as an Islamic state. A comparison with Malay blogs would show a clear disjuncture of perspectives on the issue. In the same vein, reactions to the high-profile apostasy cases that have emerged in recent years show that sentiments are divided along religious lines, regardless of language. In general, Malay and English blogs show an acute contrast in opinions, with the former expressing decidedly more conservative and exclusionary views and the latter conveying more openness to the idea of conversion out of Islam and to the principle of religious freedom writ large.

## ISLAMISM AND THE STATE

Islamization in Malaysia is essentially a social-change phenomenon with significant political implications. It has been accelerated by the UMNO and PAS’s search for an Islamic ideal that would translate into legitimacy, popularity, and electoral support. By placing greater significance on Islamic laws, values, and practices, the early 1980s saw UMNO and PAS enter a “race” to determine which of the two parties’ visions of Islam would be most successful in Malaysia.

When Mahathir Mohammad assumed office in July 1981, the global Islamic resurgence was at its peak. In an effort to build on this trend, Mahathir set out to Islamize the Malaysian government, enacting a number of policies to achieve these ends. This Islamization campaign was made public during the UMNO general assembly in 1982, when Mahathir announced that the party would embark on a new strategy that aimed “to change the attitude of the Malays in line with the requirements of Islam in this modern age.”<sup>37</sup>

The UMNO government not only ordered the restructuring of a range of Islamic institutions (both in scale and in scope), it also expanded the state bureaucracy to accommodate the return of a growing number of Malaysian students sent abroad on government scholarships during the Mahathir administration for degrees in Islamic studies, as well as the graduates of local Islamic institutions. The government also transformed the operations of *sharia* courts and mosques, and reorganized banking

structures, foundation and charity work, *zakat* collection, as well as educational institutions. Making religious knowledge a ‘regular’ subject (in other words, one that could be tested like history or math) in the mainstream school curriculum was one of the Mahathir administration’s most significant and controversial endeavors. The Islamic Teachers Training College was established in 1982 to accommodate this change in syllabi. Another notable high point of Mahathir’s enterprise of creating and restructuring Islamic institutions was the introduction of Islamic banking.<sup>38</sup> With the creation of an Islamic bank, the larger objective of the Islamizing the economy was achieved; it was also an important expression of Mahathir’s interpretation of Islamic values (*Nilai-nilai Islam*), whereby Malays can “seek wealth in a moral and legal way” and “obtain prosperity in this world and hereafter.”<sup>39</sup>

At the same time, Mahathir worked actively to suppress other interpretations of political Islam at odds with his own. Events like 1987’s Operation Lallang,<sup>40</sup> the banning of *Al Arqam* (a Muslim minority religious sect) in 1994, and the arrests of several prominent political figures, particularly from PAS, demonstrated the Mahathir administration’s willingness to use the Internal Security Act to remove all obstacles perceived to be standing in the way of the government’s Islamization policies and broader political agenda, even when the actual threat posed by some of these actors was questionable.

In the ongoing debate over the appropriate role of *sharia* law, unresolved structural tensions exist related to the question of jurisdiction and enforcement powers over alleged wrongdoings that have a religious aspect. These tensions are apparent at two stages. In the first level, confusion is caused by the legal governance system, at times hybridized in terms of a combination of *sharia* and constitutional law, and at times parallel, revolving around the Malaysian constitution and reinforced by the system of federalism that brings about a dispersal of power on the issue of the formulation of Islamic law. Essentially, states may have the power to formulate religious laws, but these formulations require ratification by the federal Parliament in order to be codified as legally binding and enforced.

The second is the dynamic that defines the relationship between civil and Islamic law. In a 1988 constitutional amendment, Article 121 1(A) stipulated that federal high courts “shall have no jurisdiction in respect of any matter within the jurisdiction of the *shari’a* courts.” Criminal law falls under federal jurisdiction, but the constitution is ambiguous in such a way that it assigns power to create and punish offenses against the laws of Islam, which has allowed many state religious authorities to interpret their jurisdiction expansively.

The boundaries of Muslim politics in Malaysia may seem straightforward, with PAS serving as the Islamist opposition on one end, which demands that Malaysia’s public spaces be governed by *sharia*, and by UMNO, the “secularist” Muslim government that is apparently set on restricting Islamism and keeping religion within the private

sphere, at the other. However, this is an illusion. As recent controversies over apostasy and the right of non-Muslims to use the word “Allah” show, differences between UMNO and PAS are not set in stone. While PAS has begun taking inclusive positions on issues relating to Islam, the UMNO has become discernibly strident and “fundamentalist” in its defense of the primacy and exclusive rights of Muslims.

In other words, the track record of PAS is considerably more inconsistent than its strident rhetoric about exclusivist Islamism suggests, while the ostensibly “secularist” UMNO party harbors many Islamist tendencies. This latter trend has been especially noticeable since the Mahathir administration, with many elements of a conservative and orthodox Islamic government being put in. Even more telling was an UMO state assemblyman’s suggestion, in July 2012, that the state government in Johor seriously consider implementing “true *hudud* law” that would govern non-Muslims as well. This represents a striking departure from PAS’s position on the implementation of *hudud* in Malaysia, which it has always claimed would be applicable only to Muslims.<sup>41</sup>

Nevertheless, since the 2013 general elections, there has been a notable convergence of interests, at least on the surface, between the two long-standing political rivals. For instance, all 12 UMNO state assemblymen in Kelantan chose to support the amendment by PAS that approved *hudud*, which was unanimously passed in the state assembly in 2015.<sup>42</sup> This was followed by the UMNO-led government’s decision in 2016 to fast-track hearings in Parliament on PAS president’s private member bill, which would increase penalties for crimes under the Syariah Court (a court of Islamic law).<sup>43</sup> Given the negative impact on its public image stemming from corruption allegations involving Prime Minister Najib Razak, UMNO could very well be motivated by a desire to signal to the largely conservative Malay electorate that it too is serious about *hudud*, and willing to cooperate with PAS for the greater good of Islam in Malaysia.<sup>44</sup>

## ENDNOTES

[1] Consider, for example, how former UMNO president and Malaysian prime minister Abdullah Badawi regularly made references to Islam in his public speeches, or how *Mingguan Malaysia* [Malaysia Weekly], a best-selling government-linked daily, has weekend columns offering advice on various matters pertaining to religion in everyday life. Malaysia has also regularly hit the country-level limit set by the Saudi government for Haj pilgrims, and there is now a three-year waiting list for Malaysians wanting to make the pilgrimage.

[2] Angel M. Rabasa, *Political Islam in Southeast Asia: Moderates, Radicals and Terrorist* (New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2003), 39.

[3] Saliha Hassan, "Islamic non-governmental organizations." in Meridith L. Weiss and Saliha Hassan, eds., *Social Movements in Malaysia* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 98.

[4] Joseph Chinyong Liow, "Political Islam in Malaysia: Problematising Discourse and Practice in the Umno-PAS 'Islamisation Race,'" *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 42, no. 2 (July, 2004), 186.

[5] *Ibid*

[6] *Ibidem*

[7] See Joseph Chinyong Liow, *Piety and Politics: The Shifting Contours of Islamism in Contemporary Malaysia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 58-64.

[8] Beh Lih Yi, "PAS to 'soften' stance on Islamic state", *Malaysiakini*, January 20, 2005, <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/33013>.

[9] *Ibid*.

[10] Azamin Amin, "Hindraf: PAS kesal hak asasi rakyat dicabuli" ("HINDRAF: PAS regrets human rights abuses"), *Harakah Daily*, November 25, 2007, <http://www.harakahdaily.net/bm/index.php/utama/hindraf-pas-kesal-hak-asasi-rakyat-dicabuli.html>. PAS was careful to warn, however, that it did not agree with all of Hindraf's demands either. See Dato' Seri Tuan Guru Abdul Hadi Awang, "Hak berhimpun diakui, tetapi sebahagian tuntutan Hindraf melampau" ("HINDRAF's right to assemble must be respected but some of its demands are unacceptable"), *Harakah Daily*, December 3, 2007, <http://www.harakahdaily.net/bm/index.php/arkib-utama/hak-berhimpun-diakui-tetapi-sebahagian-tuntutan-hindraf-melampau.html>.

[11] Basiron Abdul Wahab, "Pilihan raya umum: Negara kebajikan, tabung biasiswa antara tawaran PAS" ("General elections: PAS offers a welfare state and bursary fund"), *Harakah Daily*, August 28, 2007, <http://www.harakahdaily.net/bm/index.php/arkib-pahang-darul-makmur/pilihan-raya-umum-negara-kebajikan-tabung-biasiswa-antara-tawaran-pas.html>.

[12] "PAS mampu lahirkan negara kebajikan bila diberi peluang tadbir pusat" ("PAS can establish welfare state if allowed to administer at the federal level"), *Harakah Daily*, January 22, 2008, [www.harakahdaily.net/bm/index.php/arkib-kelantan-darul-naim/pas-mampu-lahirkan-negara-kebajikan-bila-diberi-peluang-tadbir-pusat.html](http://www.harakahdaily.net/bm/index.php/arkib-kelantan-darul-naim/pas-mampu-lahirkan-negara-kebajikan-bila-diberi-peluang-tadbir-pusat.html); See also Basiron Abdul Wahab, "Pilihan raya umum: Negara kebajikan, tabung biasiswa antara tawaran PAS" ("General elections: General elections: PAS offers a welfare state and bursary fund"), *Harakah Daily*, August 28, 2007, <http://www.harakahdaily.net/bm/index.php/arkib-pahang-darul-makmur/pilihan-raya-umum-negara-kebajikan-tabung-biasiswa-antara-tawaran-pas.html>.

[13] Muda Mohd Noor, "PAS akan lantik orang Cina jadi menteri" ("PAS will appoint Chinese minister"), *Malaysiakini*, February 6, 2008, <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/77875>

[14] *Ibid*.

- [15] James Hookway, "Malaysia's Islamic Party Unveils New Election Weapon: Christian Candidates," *Wall Street Journal*, April 15, 2013.
- [16] Nile Bowie, "Is Malaysia Teetering on the Edge of an Islamist Knife?" *Global Research* 16, May 2013.
- [17] Mohamed Nawab Mohamed Osman, "Islam, ethnicity and political power: Malay voting pattern in the 13th Malaysian elections," in Mohamed Nawab Mohamed Osman, ed., *The 13th Malaysia Elections: Issues, Trends and Future Trajectories* (Singapore: S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, 2014), 63.
- [18] James Chin, "Malaysia in 2013: Najib's Pyrrhic Victory and the Demise of 1Malaysia," *Southeast Asian Affairs* (2014), 181.
- [19] Asrul Hadi Abdullah Sani, "PAS wants hudud laws for Kelantan: What you need to know about the laws," *Straits Times*, March 20, 2015.
- [20] Terrorism Research Center, "Terrorist Group Profiles. Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia (KMM)," n.d., <http://www.terrorism.com>.
- [21] See Kamarulnizam Abdullah, "Islamic Militancy Problems in Malaysia," *SEACSN Bulletin*, January-March 2003.
- [22] *Ibid*
- [23] "Asian Militants With Alleged Al Qaeda Ties Are Accused Of Plotting Against Embassies," *Asian Wall Street Journal*, January 2, 2002.
- [24] *Ibid*.
- [25] "Religious Cults And Sects, Doctrines And Practices: Al-Ma'unah," [apologeticsindex.org](http://apologeticsindex.org), n.d..
- [26] Liow, *Piety and Politics*, 7.
- [27] "Two Policemen And Nine More Soldiers Identified As Belonging To The Movement," *New Straits Times*, July 13, 2000.
- [28] Kamarulnizam Abdullah, "Islamic Militancy Problems in Malaysia," *SEACSN Bulletin*, January-March 2003, 7.
- [29] Liow, *Piety and Politics*, 16.
- [30] *Ibid*
- [31] 'KL police see ISIS hand in grenade attack', *Straits Times*, July 5, 2016.
- [32] "Suhakam to Consider Proposal to Set Up Interreligious Council," *New Straits Times*, August 27, 2002.
- [33] *Ibid*
- [34] See, for example, Marc Lynch, *Voices of a New Arab Republic: Iraq, Al Jazeera, and Middle East Politics Today* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).
- [35] Needless to say, this general remark is made based on the comments of bloggers who actually sign their names to their posts.
- [36] See Mahathir's speech at the 33rd Annual UMNO General Assembly, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, September 10, 1982.

[37] See Norhashimah Mohd. Yasin, *Islamisation/Malaynisation: A Study on the Role of Islamic Law in the Economic Development of Malaysia: 1969–1993* (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: A. S. Noordeen, 1996), 261–64. The bank did not offer any interest on deposits it received. Instead, it would share the profits earned from investing the deposits with the bank's customers. The bank was also not charging interest on credit that it extended.

[38] Hajrudin Somun, Mahathir: *The Secret of the Malaysian Success* (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Pelanduk Publications, 2004), 164.

[39] Operation Lallang was carried out on October 27, 1987 by the Malaysian police to prevent the occurrence of racial riots due to the provocation by the ruling government towards DAP. The operation saw the arrest of 106 persons under the Internal Security Act (ISA) and the revoking of the publishing licenses of two dailies, *The Star* and the *Sin Chew Jit Poh* and two weeklies, *The Sunday Star* and *Watan*.

[40] Shazwan Mustafa Kamal, "Soi Lek flays Johor UMNO rep over hudud proposal," *Malaysiainsider*, July 2, 2012, <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/soi-lek-flays-johor-umno-rep-over-hudud-proposal>.

[41] Joceline Tan, "Big day for Kelantan hudud move," *The Star*, March 19, 2015.

[42] Rachel Middleton, "Uproar in Malaysia as PM Najib Razak's ruling party fast tracks tabling of opposition's hudud laws," *International Business Times*, May 31, 2016.

[43] Saleena Saleem, "Malaysia's Right Wing Push: Chinese Swing Benefitting BN?" *RSIS Commentaries CO16162*, June 29, 2016.