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**Acronyms**

<b>BN</b>	Barisan Nasional
<b>DAP</b>	Democratic Action Party
<b>Hindraf</b>	Hindu Rights Action Force
<b>ISA</b>	Internal Security Act
<b>MCA</b>	Malaysian Chinese Association
<b>MIC</b>	Malaysian Indian Congress
<b>NEP</b>	New Economic Policy
<b>PAS</b>	Parti Islam Se-Malaysia
<b>PKR</b>	Parti Keadilan Rakyat
<b>PPP</b>	People's Progressive Party
<b>PR</b>	Pakatan Rakyat
<b>SUPP</b>	Sarawak United People's Party
<b>UMNO</b>	United Malays National Organisation
<b>USDS</b>	United States Department of State

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In the most fundamental ways, Malaysian life is defined by ethnicity; people of the three main ethnic groups Malay, Chinese and Indian attend separate schools, eat, socialise, organise politically and work separately.<sup>1</sup> The colonial history of Malaysia with the use of Chinese and Indian labour by the British and the feeling from ethnic Malays that they were being left behind economically set the country up to divide along ethnic lines.

The special provisions provided for ethnic Malays in the constitution, and economic preferential treatment for bumiputras (sons of the soil), has institutionalised racial discrimination and restricted the mobility of minority ethnic groups. The affirmative action policies in favour of Malays, are perpetuated in the name of national unity, and stem from fear of a repeat of the race riots seen in 1969. Yet since then Malaysia has not experienced any major outbreaks of violence- rather a simmering discontent and debate over rights of the various ethnic groups continues.

Any criticism of the government, Islam preferential treatment of Malays has been consistently silenced by the government making change difficult. Malays are legally defined as Muslims under the constitution and those who wish to convert and renounce Islam find legal barriers, whereas non-Muslims have found themselves increasingly powerless in the face of Shari'a law. Chinese and Indians are restricted by the preferential policies towards Malays, and the country's indigenous people are the poorest group and lack land rights. Those critical of government policies or make comment on ethnic issues

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<sup>1</sup> 'Tall buildings, narrow minds', *Economist*, 7 September 2007, CX229467

are at risk of being detained under the Internal Security Act (ISA) or Sedition Act under the pretext of maintaining national unity.

## BACKGROUND

### History

Since independence was won from the British in 1957, political power has been in the hands of ethnic Malays, whereas commerce and industry has been dominated by ethnic Chinese.<sup>2 3</sup> The smaller Indian ethnic minority has always lacked power in part due to being brought to Malaysia by the British as indentured servants. In bringing Indians and encouraging Chinese labourers to Malaysia, Malays began to feel economically deprived.<sup>4</sup> The result is a country which has been ‘haunted by racial divisions.’<sup>5</sup>

After Independence, in an attempt to reconcile the various ethnic groups, Chinese and Indians were granted citizenship in return for ‘Special provisions’ being enshrined for Malays and ‘natives to ensure the reservation [...] of positions in the public service (other than the public service of a State) and of scholarships, exhibitions and other similar educational or training privileges or special facilities.’<sup>6</sup>

In May 1969, a build up of racial tension and frustration flowing from recent parliamentary elections led to race riots in the Malaysian capital, Kuala Lumpur, resulting in hundreds of deaths. Some estimate that as many as 600 people were killed – mainly ethnic Chinese.<sup>7 8</sup> Malays had become increasingly frustrated with the dominance of Chinese in business and their increasing wealth, which was compounded when Chinese opposition political parties gained more control in parliamentary elections. At a post election meeting, some ethnic Chinese in attendance made comments provoking ethnic Malays – who in retaliation attacked the Chinese, killing at least eight people, sparking the riot which led to so many more deaths.<sup>9 10</sup>

### Affirmative action policy

After the 1969 riots, the government introduced a ‘New Economic Policy,’ an affirmative action policy of positive discrimination towards the ethnic Malay majority and indigenous people, collectively known as ‘bumiputras’ (sons of the soil). The policy reserved quotas for bumiputras in universities, business and the civil service and provided reduced rates for home buyers.<sup>11</sup> It was designed to boost Malays and indigenous groups in the economic sphere.<sup>12</sup> Yet the policy has created resentment in the ethnic Chinese and

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<sup>2</sup> ‘Race war in Malaysia’, *Time Magazine*, 23 May 1969, CX229282

<sup>3</sup> ‘Through the years’, *Star Online*, 7 March 2008, CX229283

<sup>4</sup> ‘Malaysia’s new politics: National Front rule in jeopardy?’, *International Institute for Strategic Studies*, 2008, CX216473

<sup>5</sup> ‘Malaysia’s new politics: National Front rule in jeopardy?’, *International Institute for Strategic Studies*, 2008, CX216473

<sup>6</sup> ‘Constitution of Malaysia,’ <http://confinder.richmond.edu/admin/docs/malaysia.pdf>, viewed on 12 July 2009.

<sup>7</sup> ‘Race war in Malaysia’, *Time Magazine*, 23 May 1969, CX229282

<sup>8</sup> ‘Malaysia’s new politics: National Front rule in jeopardy?’, *International Institute for Strategic Studies*, 2008, CX216473

<sup>9</sup> ‘Race war in Malaysia’, *Time Magazine*, 23 May 1969, CX229282

<sup>10</sup> ‘Malaysia’s new politics: National Front rule in jeopardy?’, *International Institute for Strategic Studies*, 2008, CX216473

<sup>11</sup> See: ‘Malaysia’s PM vows ethnic reforms,’ *British Broadcasting Corporation*, 21 May 2009, CX226717,

<sup>12</sup> ‘Forgotten community: many of Malaysia’s poor are Indians,’ *Asia Week*, 26 January 2001, CX49061

Indian communities of Malaysia, as they see the Malay majority receiving special privileges.<sup>13</sup>

Although there have been no outbreaks of wide scale ethnic violence as were seen in 1969, Malaysian society has continued to be characterised by divisions along ethnic lines. According to Amnesty International, racial discrimination remains institutionalised in Malaysia.<sup>14</sup> This is clearly reflected in the affirmative action policy. As one commentator put it 'the social contract may once have seemed necessary to keep the peace but now it and the official racism that it is used to justify look indefensible: it is absurd and unjust to tell the children of families that have lived in Malaysia for generations that, in effect, they are lucky not to be deported and will have to put up with second-class treatment for the rest of their lives, in the name of 'racial harmony.'<sup>15</sup> Similarly, according to the United States department of State (USDS), the affirmative action policy effectively limits opportunities for non-bumiputras, yet the government sees these programs as necessary to ensure ethnic harmony and political stability.<sup>16</sup>

However, Minority Rights Group International notes that the policy 'is being debated openly more and more by the mainstream media. Previously such issues were considered 'sensitive'. Although the debates are often ethnically charged, the very fact that such issues are debated is a positive step.'<sup>17</sup> This is also reflected in the recent changes announced by Prime Minister Razak (see below).

#### **Recent government policy related to ethnicity**

After Abdullah Ahmad Badawi resigned in April 2009, due to heavy losses in the March 2008 general elections, Najib Abdul Razak became Prime Minister of Malaysia.<sup>18</sup> Having been named Prime Minister, Razak said 'one of his priorities would be to close a widening ethnic and religious divide, after Malaysia's ethnic minorities shifted towards the opposition in large numbers in the 2008 polls, fearing their rights were being eroded.'<sup>19</sup> <sup>20</sup> He has introduced the concept of One Malaysia or 1Malaysia as it is known, with a focus on national unity and an attempt to move Malaysia away from seeing society through an 'ethnic prism.'<sup>21</sup> <sup>22</sup>

In January 2009, the government decided not to introduce a Race Relations Act. The Culture, Arts and Heritage Minister Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal announced that the cabinet had decided 'race relations is something that comes naturally and cannot be forced through legislation' and that Malaysia had lived in racial harmony for 50 years and therefore did not require a Race Relations Act.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> 'Malaysia plans scholarships free from racial rules', *Associated Press (AP)*, 29 June 2009, CX228964

<sup>14</sup> 'Amnesty International Annual Report Malaysia 2009', *Amnesty International*, 28 May 2009 CX227331

<sup>15</sup> 'Tall buildings, narrow minds', *Economist*, 7 September 2007, CX229467

<sup>16</sup> '2008 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Malaysia', *United States Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor*, 25 February 2009, CISNET

<sup>17</sup> 'World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples - Malaysia : Overview', *Minority Rights Group International*, 2007, CX230978

<sup>18</sup> 'Country Profile: Malaysia', *BBC News*, 7 April 2009, CX229709

<sup>19</sup> 'Country Profile: Malaysia', *BBC News*, 7 April 2009, CX229709

<sup>20</sup> 'Malaysia Dilutes Its System of Ethnic Preferences', *New York Times*, 30 June 2009, CX229523

<sup>21</sup> 'Najib wants 'One Malaysia'', *Malaysian Insider, The*, 1 April 2009, CX223653

<sup>22</sup> 'One Malaysia is about all races: Najib', *Bernama*, 17 April 2009, CX229284

<sup>23</sup> 'No need for Race Relations Act, Cabinet says', *Star Online*, 20 January 2009, CX218817

## DIAC-IN-CONFIDENCE

In February 2009, Malaysia's King 'called for increased efforts to promote racial harmony in the multiethnic nation, saying that the government will prosecute anyone seen to be dividing the people.'<sup>24</sup> Yet it is calls such as this that reflect government suppression of opposition under the shroud of preventing 'national unrest.'<sup>25</sup> The Sedition Act is used to silence those who challenge government policy or those who 'promote feelings of ill will and hostility between ethnic groups in Malaysia.'<sup>26</sup>

Yet limited signs of concrete government policy changes in favour of equality of ethnic groups were evident in April 2009, when Razak announced the abolition of the requirement for foreign investors to have 30% ethnic-Malay ownership in some sectors such as health and transport.<sup>27 28</sup> In June 2009, Razak took another step to dilute the policy by announcing student scholarships would be awarded regardless of race. Previously, under the positive discrimination for Malays, approximately 55% of scholarships were reserved for Malays. The announcements have been seen by some as a step towards placating the discontent of ethnic Chinese and Malays who led the move away from Barisan Nasional (BN) in the 2008 elections. Alternatively, the changes may have more to do with the economic downturn in an attempt to encourage investment. Some commentators judge that the changes in the policy are 'not enough to soothe minorities' anger against government privileges for the country's majority Malays.'<sup>29</sup> The changes, although significant in that the issue of privileges for Malays would not be touched by past Prime Ministers in fear of losing Malay votes, do not represent a major shift away from preferential treatment of Malays, according to a recent Associated Press article.<sup>30</sup>

### Political Parties

As highlighted by the UK Foreign Office, 'Malaysian political parties are distinguished more by their differing racial compositions than by competing political philosophies,'<sup>31</sup> although the two coalitions, Barisan Nasional and Pakatan Rakyat, attempt to bring together various ethnic interests.

'Elections are held every five years. The Barisan Nasional coalition was returned to power on 8 March 2008, but with a much reduced simple majority. For the first time since independence, the ruling alliance, which won the 21 March 2004 general election by a landslide, lost its two-thirds majority of the seats in Parliament, and five of 13 federal states to the three opposition parties, which together formed the Pakatan Rakyat coalition.'<sup>32</sup>

### Barisan Nasional (BN) - National Front

BN has been the ruling coalition since federation. It consists of ethnic Malay, Chinese and Indian parties, but the most dominant and influential party is United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) – the largest ethnically Malay party. Since independence BN has

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<sup>24</sup> 'Malaysian king calls for racial unity', *Associated Press*, 19 February 2009, CX221069

<sup>25</sup> 'Freedom in the World Country Report Malaysia 2008', *Freedom House*, 2008, CX209046

<sup>26</sup> 'Human Rights Watch World Report Malaysia 2009', Human Rights Watch, 14 January 2009, CX218246

<sup>27</sup> 'Malaysia plans scholarships free from racial rules', *Associated Press*, 29 June 2009, CX228964

<sup>28</sup> 'Malaysia relaxes racial policies', *Wall Street Journal*, 23 April 2009, CX224913

<sup>29</sup> 'Malaysia plans scholarships free from racial rules', *Associated Press*, 29 June 2009, CX228964

<sup>30</sup> 'Malaysia makes bold changes in race-based policies', *Associated Press*, 5 July 2009, CX229526

<sup>31</sup> 'Country Profile: Malaysia', *UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, 13 May 2009, CX229545

<sup>32</sup> 'Country Profile: Malaysia', *UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, 13 May 2009, CX229545

been in power and has enjoyed a majority in parliament allowing it to change the constitution, which it has done more than 40 times since independence.<sup>33</sup>

The main parties forming the BN coalition:

- **United Malays National Organisation (UMNO)**

UMNO was established in 1946. It is the party that has led all governments since independence.<sup>34</sup> It is the dominant component of the BN and 'has always emphasized Malay advancement as its priority. But because of the size and political weight of the minority populations, it has needed to govern in close collaboration with parties representing Chinese and Indian community interests.'<sup>35</sup>

The 'paradox' of UMNO has been outlined by some commentators, in that the party 'continues to portray itself to Malays as the defender of their privileges yet tries to convince everyone else that it is the guarantor of racial harmony.'<sup>36</sup>

- **Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC)**

The MIC has traditionally represented ethnic Indians and is part of the ruling BN coalition.<sup>37</sup>

- **Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA)**

The MCA was formed in 1949 as a welfare organisation to represent Chinese interests when they were confined to fenced villages as suspected communists. As a member party of BN, some argue that the MCA has no input into government policies and was also weakened after the 2008 election losses for BN.<sup>38</sup>

BN was registered in 1974, composed of Alliance members (which was formed by UMNO, MIC and MCA in 1955 for the country's first elections – see below), along with Parti Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS), People's Progressive Party (PPP), Gerakan, Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP), Parti Pesaka Bumiputera, and the Sabah Alliance Party. It has grown over time with the addition of a range of other smaller parties.<sup>39</sup> The coalition's original aim was to 'minimise racial politics.'<sup>40</sup> In February 2009, Prime Minister Najib said 'only the BN government was capable of championing the cause of all ethnic groups in the country besides having translated all policies into actual implementation.'<sup>41</sup>

In the March 2008 elections, the BN coalition had its worst result ever since independence in 1957.<sup>42</sup> The coalition lost control over five of the thirteen states of the

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<sup>33</sup> 'Malaysia's governing coalition suffers a setback', *New York Times*, 9 March 2008, CX194975

<sup>34</sup> 'Tall buildings, narrow minds', *Economist*, 7 September 2007, CX229467

<sup>35</sup> 'Malaysia's new politics: National Front rule in jeopardy?', *International Institute for Strategic Studies*, 2008, CX216473

<sup>36</sup> 'Tall buildings, narrow minds', *Economist*, 7 September 2007, CX229467

<sup>37</sup> 'Temple demolition raises temper', *Times of India*, 30 September 2008, CX212352

<sup>38</sup> 'As MCA turns 60, what's next?', *South China Morning Post*, 27 February 2009, CX229369

<sup>39</sup> 'Gerakan's BN Poser Continues', *Bernama*, 24 September 2008, CX229527

<sup>40</sup> 'Through the years', *Star Online*, 7 March 2008, CX229283

<sup>41</sup> 'Najib: BN Agenda To Bring Changes To All Races', *Bernama*, 12 February 2009, CX220593

<sup>42</sup> 'Malaysia's BN coalition suffers worst electoral defeat', *Channel News Asia*, 9 March 2009, CX229329

country, and failed to win an outright majority in parliament.<sup>43</sup> The opposition coalition-Pakatan Rakyat- quadrupled their seats in parliament. It was suggested by commentators that the increasing number of religious disputes and preferential treatment of Malays created resentment among the ethnic Indians and Chinese, influencing them to vote for the opposition.<sup>44</sup>

### **Pakatan Rakyat (PR) -Peoples Alliance**

PR is the opposition coalition bringing together the Democratic Action Party (DAP), Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) and Parti Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS).<sup>45</sup> Despite limited and restricted media access (unlike the ruling BN),<sup>46</sup> the opposition coalition made major gains in the March 2008 elections, marking the first significant challenge to the ruling BN coalition since independence.<sup>47</sup>

Anwar Ibrahim, the former Deputy Minister controversially sacked and jailed for charges of corruption and sodomy, is the leader of the opposition alliance.<sup>48</sup> His ban from politics ended in April 2008. The charges laid against Ibrahim have been widely questioned as a means to silence his criticism of the government. Although ethnically Malay, he denounces the affirmative action policy for Malays.<sup>49</sup>

Recently (in June/July 2009), the difficulty of reaching agreement over certain issues and the influence of ethnicity and religion over politics has been reflected in the disputes between member parties of PR. The coalition was put under threat of breaking up due to a dispute regarding the demolition of a pig abattoir in Kedah.<sup>50</sup> The DAP has also voiced concern over the housing quota allocated for Malays.<sup>51</sup>

The parties which form the PR coalition:

- **Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) - People's Justice Party**  
PKR is Anwar Ibrahim's 'predominantly Malay and middle-class' party.<sup>52</sup>
- **Parti Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS) - Islamic Party of Malaysia/Pan Malayan Islamic Party**  
PAS formed in 1951, later joined BN but then separated from the coalition in 1977, after which it became a strong opposition party – is now apart of PR. 'Though ostensibly non-racial, its main support base lies among Malays who

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<sup>43</sup> 'Malaysia's new politics: National Front rule in jeopardy?', *International Institute for Strategic Studies*, 2008, CX216473

<sup>44</sup> 'Malaysia's governing coalition suffers a setback', *New York Times*, 9 March 2008, CX194975

<sup>45</sup> 'Politics of absolutes', *Daily Times- Pakistan*, 3 July 2009, CX229715

<sup>46</sup> 'Freedom in the World Country Report Malaysia 2008', *Freedom House*, 2008, CX209046

<sup>47</sup> 'Malaysia's governing coalition suffers a setback', *New York Times*, 9 March 2008, CX194975

<sup>48</sup> 'Malaysian opposition leader Anwar marks end of political ban', *Agence France Presse*, 12 April 2008, CX229716

<sup>49</sup> 'Human Rights Watch World Report Malaysia 2009', *Human Rights Watch*, 14 January 2009, CX218246

<sup>50</sup> 'Politics of absolutes', *Daily Times- Pakistan*, 3 July 2009, CX229715

<sup>51</sup> 'Analyst blames leaders' lack of political maturity', *Bernama*, 2 July 2009, CX229536

<sup>52</sup> 'Malaysian politics descends into chaos', *Asia Sentinel*, 1 September 2008, CX209219

would like to see Islamic values implanted more firmly in the constitution and daily life.’<sup>53</sup>

- **Democratic Action Party (DAP)**

The DAP is a ‘predominantly Chinese-Malaysian Left-leaning party’<sup>54</sup> although also has the support of some Indians and Malays.<sup>55</sup>

## ETHNIC GROUPS

### Malays

#### *Background*

Malays are the dominant and majority ethnic group in Malaysia, comprising 50 percent of the population.<sup>56</sup> As discussed above, Malays enjoy special government privileges through affirmative action policies which provide quotas in housing, education and employment. Although the preferential treatment has, to a degree, boosted Malays in the economic sphere, it has also created greater economic disparity between Malays themselves.

As defined in Article 160 of the Malaysian Constitution, “Malay” means a person who professes the religion of Islam, habitually speaks the Malay language, (and) conforms to Malay custom’<sup>57</sup> As Muslims, Malays are thus subject to Shari’a law on all matters related to Islam, as stipulated in Article 121 of the Constitution, including marriage, divorce, custody issues and inheritance. The 2009 article ‘Researching Islamic Law,’ published by the New York University School of Law and information provided by Global Security, indicates that Malaysia maintains a dual justice system with the provision for Shari’a courts in the states and the civil court system for the whole country.<sup>58 59</sup> According to the New York University School of Law, all the states in Malaysia have a Shari’a court system, yet CRS has been unable to locate information specifying which states enforce Islamic law. The USDS declares that Shari’a laws and the ‘degree of enforcement varied from state to state.’<sup>60</sup>

#### *Freedom of religion*

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<sup>53</sup> ‘Malaysia’s new politics : National Front rule in jeopardy?’, *International Institute for Strategic Studies*, 2008, CX216473

<sup>54</sup> ‘Politics of absolutes’, *Daily Times- Pakistan*, 3 July 2009, CX229715

<sup>55</sup> ‘Malaysia plans scholarships free from racial rules’, *Associated Press*, 29 June 2009, CX228964

<sup>56</sup> ‘The World Fact Book: Malaysia’, *United States Central Intelligence Agency*, Last updated 26 June 2009, [https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/MY.html?bcsi\\_scan\\_80CA22F9AD71C623=0&bcsi\\_scan\\_filename=MY.html](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/MY.html?bcsi_scan_80CA22F9AD71C623=0&bcsi_scan_filename=MY.html), viewed on 12 July 2009.

<sup>57</sup> ‘Constitution of Malaysia’, <http://confinder.richmond.edu/admin/docs/malaysia.pdf>, viewed on 12 July 2009.

<sup>58</sup> ‘Researching Islamic Law: Malaysian Sources’, *Shaikh Mohamed Noordin, Hauser Global Law School Program, New York University School of Law*, CISLIB 17660

<sup>59</sup> ‘Malaysia Religion’, *Global Security*, CX230987

<sup>60</sup> ‘Human Rights Watch World Report Malaysia 2009’, *Human Rights Watch*, 14 January 2009, CX218246

## DIAC-IN-CONFIDENCE

According to Human Rights Watch, ‘Malays wishing to renounce Islam (apostasy) to profess other faiths or beliefs, and Muslims who hold beliefs that “deviate” from Sunni Islam, are subject to criminal sanctions.’<sup>61</sup>

The case of Lina Joy displays the difficulty Malays face if they wish to renounce Islam. The High Court rejected Joy’s battle to be recognised as a Christian after converting from Islam. The decision meant she could not have the word Islam deleted from her MyKad (National Identity Card which must be carried at all times) ‘on the grounds that her renunciation of Islam had not been validated by the (Shari’a) Court or any other lawful Islamic authorities.’<sup>62</sup> Therefore, to legally renounce Islam, Malays, such as Lina Joy, have to ‘obtain an exit certificate from the Shari’a court in order to leave Islam. But Lina – and others like her – are reluctant to subject themselves to a religious court that has no jurisdiction over them since they are no longer professing Muslims.’<sup>63</sup>

A DFAT Country Information report from April 2008 found that:

‘In legal terms, there is no effective way for a Malaysian Muslim to renounce Islam, particularly after the decision in the case of Lina Joy. The civil courts have given the Syariah courts an implied jurisdiction to determine the religious status of Muslims who attempt to renounce Islam (note that this implied jurisdiction may be subject to constitutional challenge). However, only one state in Malaysia, Negeri Sembilan, provides an actual mechanism for the Syariah court to declare that a person has renounced Islam: Administration of Islamic Law (Negeri Sembilan) Enactment 1991, s.90A. Our legal contacts have told us that this mechanism is not practically available and may involve protracted dealings with the court. None of the other state Syariah courts has the power to allow a Muslim to renounce Islam.’<sup>64</sup>

According to the USDS, in its International Religious Freedom Report of 2008, Muslims who wish to convert to another religion or renounce Islam must obtain approval from a Shari’a court and be declared apostates. Shari’a courts ‘seldom grant such requests.’<sup>65</sup> Freedom House finds that ‘Shari’a courts effectively prohibit Muslims from renouncing their faith, the (Lina Joy) verdict rendered conversion impossible.’ It was reported that Joy left Malaysia rather than pursue the matter in a Shari’a court.<sup>66</sup>

The USDS finds that Shari’a courts have the authority to force those who seek to convert or renounce Islam to religious rehabilitations centres.<sup>67</sup> In August 2007, it was reported that Selangor state Islamic authorities had released a Muslim woman who had been detained for four months for marrying a Hindu. Another woman claimed she was mentally tortured by ‘Islamic religious police during her six-month detention for renouncing Islam in favour of the Hindu religion.’<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> ‘Human Rights Watch World Report 2006’, *Human Rights Watch*, 19 January 2006, CX146133

<sup>62</sup> ‘Federal Court Dismisses Lina Joy's Appeal to Drop Islam in IC’, *Bernama*, 30 May 2007, CX178323

<sup>63</sup> ‘Court denies woman's appeal to leave Islam’, *Compass Direct*, 18 August 2008, CX211463

<sup>64</sup> ‘Apostasy’, *Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)*, 4 April 2008, CX197030

<sup>65</sup> ‘International Religious Freedom Report 2008, Malaysia’, *Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, United States Department of State*, 19 September 2008

<sup>66</sup> ‘International Religious Freedom Report 2008, Malaysia’, *Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, United States Department of State*, 19 September 2008

<sup>67</sup> ‘International Religious Freedom Report 2008, Malaysia’, *Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, United States Department of State*, 19 September 2008

<sup>68</sup> ‘Malaysia releases woman in Hindu marriage case’, *Reuters*, 11 August 2007, CX231041

Since 1998 Muslims (and thus all Malays) must be identified as such on their MyKad, the national identity card.<sup>69</sup> In addition, Muslims must carry photo identification of themselves and their spouse to prove their marriage. According to the USDS, these identity documents can be used by authorities to determine whether someone is subject to Shari'a laws such as 'khalwat, an act of "close proximity" between unmarried men and women. Khalwat is a criminal offence under Shari'a law and punishable with two years imprisonment, a fine of \$940 (3,000 ringgit), or both, upon conviction. Religious police can conduct raids at hotels and bars in order to catch Muslims engaged in close proximity, consuming alcohol, or indecently dressed and charge them under Shari'a law.'<sup>70</sup>

## Chinese

### *Background*

The ethnic Chinese represent the largest minority group in Malaysia, comprising 24 percent of the population.<sup>71</sup> Buddhism, Christianity, Taoism, Confucianism are the main religions of the ethnic Chinese population of Malaysia.<sup>72</sup>

According to Minority rights Group International,

‘Although the Chinese are represented in the government, they are marginalized in the key policy decision-making process. In successive elections, the majority of Chinese votes have gone to Chinese-based opposition political parties. Resentment over the *Bumiputeras* remains high among members of this minority, though the Chinese have also benefited from the country's relatively good economic performance of recent decades.'<sup>73</sup>

In mid 2008, there was widespread press coverage and political debate over comments by an UMNO chief who said ‘Chinese were only immigrants, (so) it was impossible to achieve equal rights among races.'<sup>74</sup> This comment regenerated the debate about the rights of ethnic minorities in Malaysia, and the government's preferential treatment of ethnic Malays.

In 2007, the Canadian Immigration Research Board found that ‘information on specific examples of discrimination against Malaysians of Chinese descent was scarce among the sources consulted [...] However, according to the United States Department of State, the Malaysian police have been accused of ethnic profiling in arresting Chinese women deemed to be prostitutes.'<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> ‘Apostasy,’ *Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade*, 4 April 2008, CX197030

<sup>70</sup> ‘International Religious Freedom Report 2008, Malaysia’, *Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, United States Department of State*, 19 September 2008

<sup>71</sup> ‘The World Fact Book: Malaysia’, *United States Central Intelligence Agency*, Last updated 26 June 2009, [https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/MY.html?bcsi\\_scan\\_80CA22F9AD71C623=0&bcsi\\_scan\\_filename=MY.html](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/MY.html?bcsi_scan_80CA22F9AD71C623=0&bcsi_scan_filename=MY.html), viewed on 12 July 2009.

<sup>72</sup> ‘Malaysia minorities – Chinese profile’, *Minority Rights Group International*, CX231045

<sup>73</sup> ‘Malaysia minorities – Chinese profile’, *Minority Rights Group International*, CX231045

<sup>74</sup> ‘Malaysian slammed for calling Chinese 'immigrants'', *Associated Press*, 3 September 2008, CX209383

<sup>75</sup> ‘Reports of discrimination against Malaysians of Chinese descent (June 2004 - October 2007)’, *Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada*, 5 November 2007, CX231068

According to the USDS, police and ethnic Chinese community leaders report that Malaysian women who are victims of trafficking were usually ethnic Chinese.<sup>76</sup>

#### *Detention*

In September 2008, MP Teresa Kok was detained under the ISA for 'causing tension and conflict among races.' The police claimed that Kok 'created religious tension by organising a petition to lower the loudspeaker volume for the Muslim call of prayers (azan); made a statement that 30 percent of the Selangor Islamic Department's allocation for religious funding be given to non-Islamic religious groups; and opposed the use of Jawi, the Malay language written in Arabic script, on street signs. Prior to her arrest, the UMNO-owned Malay language newspaper, Utusan, pursued a two-week campaign highlighting these allegations against her.'<sup>77</sup>

Tan Hoon Cheng, a journalist for the Chinese-language paper Sin Chew, reported on a speech by Ahmad Ismail, a local UMNO party leader, in which he described Malaysian-Chinese as "squatters" and "immigrants." On 12 September, police detained Tan under the ISA because "her life was threatened," according to the Home Minister. The public reaction, including the Malaysian Chinese Association's threat to leave the ruling National Front coalition, forced the government to release her within 18 hours of her detention.'<sup>78</sup>

### **Indian**

#### *Background*

Ethnic Indians comprise around 7 percent of the population of Malaysia.<sup>79</sup> They are divided into 80 percent Tamil, Telugus represent 3.4 percent, Malayalees 4.7 percent, and North Indians which include Punjabis and Gujaratis 7.7 percent. In terms of religion, 81.2 percent are Hindu, 6.7 percent Muslims, 4 percent Christian, and Sikhs and Jains represent 3.1 percent.<sup>80</sup>

The Indian minority is marginalised by society and government policies which favour ethnic Malays. The poor position of Indians in Malaysian society is a continuation of British colonial times when Indians were brought to Malaysia as indentured labourers to work on rubber plantations.<sup>81</sup> Many Indians continue to work on plantations and in other menial, low paid jobs and live in squatters' quarters.<sup>82</sup> Furthermore, ethnic Indian women are highlighted by the USDS as particularly vulnerable to domestic trafficking for sexual and labour exploitation.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> '2008 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Malaysia', *United States Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor*, 25 February 2009, CISNET

<sup>77</sup> '2008 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Malaysia', *United States Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor*, 25 February 2009, CISNET

<sup>78</sup> '2008 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Malaysia', *United States Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor*, 25 February 2009, CISNET

<sup>79</sup> 'The World Fact Book: Malaysia', *United States Central Intelligence Agency*, Last updated 26 June 2009, [https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/MY.html?bcsl\\_scan\\_80CA22F9AD71C623=0&bcsl\\_scan\\_filename=MY.html](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/MY.html?bcsl_scan_80CA22F9AD71C623=0&bcsl_scan_filename=MY.html), viewed on 12 July 2009.

<sup>80</sup> 'Malaysia: Human Rights Report 2007: Civil and Political Rights', *Suaram*, 2008, CISLIB 16433

<sup>81</sup> 'Forgotten community: many of Malaysia's poor are Indians', *Asia Week*, 26 January 2001, CX49061

<sup>82</sup> 'Ethnic Indians Blame Britain for Sorry Plight', *Inter Press Service*, 11 September 2007, CX229538

<sup>83</sup> '2008 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Malaysia', *United States Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor*, February 25 2009, CISNET

A range of sources highlight that ‘Indians lag behind other ethnic groups by almost all measures.’<sup>84</sup> They overly represented in crime, with 40 percent of convicted criminals being Indian, they are in low numbers at university, are ranked lowest in elementary school exams, a larger proportion of Indian children do not attend primary school, the suicide rate is higher for Indians and Tamil language schools are often under funded.<sup>85</sup>

#### *Effect of affirmative action policies*

According to the USDS and human rights activists, the affirmative action policies limit opportunities for non-bumiputras, including Indians and leave many Indians in poverty.<sup>86</sup> It has also been found that ‘Indians used to be well represented in the civil service, but their numbers dropped in the wake of NEP quotas for bumiputras. Unlike the Chinese, the Indians did not have the economic clout to counteract the NEP’s effects; they were also too few in numbers to wield much political influence. The result today is a nation divided as much along race lines as along class lines.’<sup>87</sup>

#### *Treatment by police*

In February 2009, the Malaysian Indian congress announced that, due to the ‘increasing brutality and deaths in police lock-ups of ethnic Indians,’ it had set up a body to monitor their detention.<sup>88</sup> According to The Hindu Rights Action Force (Hindraf), ‘90% of the deaths in police and prison custody victims are Indians.’<sup>89</sup> In January 2009, A.Kugan, an Indian man who was arrested for stealing a car, died in police custody. There are two conflicting autopsy reports, the second indicating a severe beating leading to kidney failure and his death.<sup>90</sup> An inquiry into his death has been delayed until August 2009.<sup>91</sup> Sanjeev Kumar who was detained under the ISA in 2007 was allegedly tortured while in custody. He was interrogated for long periods of time, and not given medical treatment.<sup>92</sup>

#### *Indian Politics*

The Hindu Rights Action Force (Hindraf) was established in 2005 to fight for Hindu and ethnic Indian rights.<sup>93</sup> In November 2007, Hindraf organised a protest to highlight the discrimination of ethnic Indians in Malaysia, with the symbolic delivery of a lawsuit to the British High Commission against the British government for compensation on behalf of the ancestors of indentured Indian labourers who were brought to Malaysia by the British colonial government in the 1800s.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> ‘Forgotten community: many of Malaysia’s poor are Indians’, *Asia Week*, 26 January 2001, CX49061

<sup>85</sup> ‘Ethnic Indians Blame Britain for Sorry Plight’, *Inter Press Service*, 11 September 2007, CX229538

<sup>86</sup> ‘Malaysia arrests ethnic Indians’, *British Broadcasting Corporation*, 13 December 2007, CX189803

<sup>87</sup> ‘Forgotten community: many of Malaysia’s poor are Indians’, *Asia Week*, 26 January 2001, CX49061

<sup>88</sup> ‘Malaysian watchdog to monitor brutality on Indians’, *Hindu, The*, 2 February 2009, CX219779

<sup>89</sup> ‘Malaysian Indian Minority and Human Rights Violations Annual Report 2008’, *HINDRAF*, 7-9 January 2009, CISLIB 16973

<sup>90</sup> ‘Detainee died from police abuse’, *The New Straits Times*, 3 March 2009, CX229560

<sup>91</sup> ‘Mohan Singh given Islamic burial’, *Bernama*, 7 July 2009 CX229528

<sup>92</sup> ‘2008 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Malaysia’, *United States Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor*, 25 February 2009, CISNET

<sup>93</sup> ‘Ethnic Indians on the warpath’, *Inter Press Service (IPS)*, 25 November 2007, CX188832

<sup>94</sup> ‘Malaysian police tear gas ethnic Indian rally: witnesses’, *Agence France Presse*, 24 November 2007, CX229530

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The Malaysian government had banned the November 2007 protest, but an estimated 8,000 to 10,000 protestors defied the ban.<sup>95</sup> The police used tear gas and chemically laced water to disperse the protestors.<sup>96</sup> The following month, five ethnic Indian leaders of Hindraf were arrested for organising and participating in the mass protest. The men, M. Manoharan, P. Uthayakumar, V. Ganabatirau, R. Kenghadharan, K. Vasantha Kumar, have come to be known as the 'Hindraf five.' They were detained from December 2007 until April and May 2009 under the ISA which allows for indefinite detention without trial.<sup>97</sup>

Waytha Moorthy Hindraf's chairman was also detained after the November 2007 protests, after his release he went into self-imposed overseas exile, fearing his campaign to raise awareness of Indian marginalised while overseas would lead him to be arrested on his return along with the five other HINDRAF leaders. The government revoked his passport in March 2008 and he remains overseas.<sup>98</sup>

In October 2008, Hindraf was declared an illegal organisation,<sup>99</sup> because according to the Home Minister, Hindraf 'would continue to pose a threat to public order, the security and sovereignty of the country as well as the prevailing racial harmony.'<sup>100</sup> Furthermore, he said 'Hindraf had actively exploited the Indian community to organise illegal assemblies and street demonstrations without permits to the point of causing a segment of the community to rise up against the government and also hatred among the Malays and Indians in the country.'<sup>101</sup> The banning of Hindraf and use of the ISA can be seen as an attempt to silence critics of the government and policies which favour the Malay majority.

In April 2009, Razak, in one of his first actions as Prime Minister, ordered the release of 13 ISA detainees, including two of the Hindraf Five; V. Ganabatirau and R. Kengadharan.<sup>102</sup> He subsequently ordered the release of the remaining three, M. Manoharan, K. Vasantha Kumar and P. Uthayakumar, in May 2009.<sup>103</sup>

Although Hindraf has been banned, Indians are significantly more represented politically than in the past. 'There are now multiple voices for the Indians, both in the Federal Government and in the Pakatan-ruled state governments. There are more Indian MPs in Parliament than ever before, in addition to more Indians in the local and district councils.'<sup>104</sup> Recently (2009) the Makkal Sakti (People's Power) Party formed as a political party to 'voice the problems of the minority ethnic Indian community.'<sup>105</sup> The effect of this is yet to be seen in the political process.

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<sup>95</sup> 'Malaysian police tear gas ethnic Indian rally: witnesses', *Agence France Presse*, 24 November 2007, CX229530

<sup>96</sup> 'Ethnic Indian protesters clash with Malaysian police', *Independent, The*, 26 November 2007, CX229297

<sup>97</sup> 'Malaysia arrests ethnic Indians', *British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)*, 13 December 2007, CX189803

<sup>98</sup> '2008 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Malaysia', *United States Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor*, 25 February 2009, CISNET

<sup>99</sup> 'Hindraf declared illegal', *Bernama*, 15 October 2008, CX212475

<sup>100</sup> 'Hindraf declared an illegal organisation', *Bernama*, 15 October 2008, CX229187

<sup>101</sup> 'Hindraf declared an illegal organisation', *Bernama*, 15 October 2008, CX229187

<sup>102</sup> 'All 13 ISA detainees released (Update 3)', *Star Online*, 5 April 2009, CX223840

<sup>103</sup> 'Three Hindraf leaders and 10 others leave Kamunting', *Bernama*, 9 May 2009, CX225915

<sup>104</sup> 'More choices for Indians', *Star Online, The (Malaysia)*, 19 December 2008, CX216937

<sup>105</sup> 'Citizenship of 60,000 Malaysian Indians a priority: Pol outfit', *Times of India*, 7 June 2009, CX229298

*Demolition of homes and places of worship*

There are a number of incidents across the country where Indians had their homes and temples demolished. In July 2009, residents of Kampung Lorong Buah Pala, a traditional Indian village in Penang, were still fighting to save their homes from being demolished to make space for development projects, with an appeal court ruling the residents would receive no compensation.<sup>106</sup> There have been numerous incidents of Indian temples being demolished, as many Indian temples were built on rubber plantations during the British colonial era. The land, after independence, was transferred to the government who has the authority by law to demolish temples.<sup>107</sup> 'In October 2007, authorities demolished the 100 year old Maha Mariamman Hindu Temple and reportedly assaulted its Chief Priest.'<sup>108</sup>

**Indigenous people**

*Background*

According to Article 161A of the Malaysian Constitution 'The races to be treated for the purposes of the definition of "native" in Clause (6) as indigenous to Sarawak are the Bukitans, Bisayahs, Dusuns, Sea Dayaks, Land Dayaks, Kadayans, Kalabit, Kayans, Kenyags (Including Sabups and Sipengs), Kajangs (including Sekapans,. Kejamans, Lahanans, Punans, Tanjongs and Kanowits), Lugats, Lisums, Malays, Melanos, Muruts, Penans, Sians, Tagals, Tabuns and Ukits.'

The indigenous people of Malaysia are known as 'Orang Asli' (original inhabitants) and also fall under the 'bumiputra' (sons of the soil) definition along with ethnic Malays. They originate and mainly live in Sarawak and Sabah but also the peninsular region.<sup>109</sup>

Approximately 70 per cent of indigenous Malays practise traditional animist religions, 10 per cent are Christian and 15–20 per cent Muslim, though the percentage of Orang Asli who are Muslim has been steadily increasing in more recent years.'<sup>110</sup>

According to the USDS, 'the Orang Asli, who number approximately 140,000, constituted the poorest group in the country. Government statistics, in 2007, categorised approximately 77 percent of Orang Asli households as living below the poverty level,' making them the poorest group in Malaysia. Women from indigenous groups are particularly vulnerable to trafficking for sexual and labour exploitation.'<sup>111</sup>

Although indigenous people have the same constitutional rights as other citizens, laws related to people in the peninsular region give authority to the non-Orang Asli Minister for Rural Development. According to the USDS, 'as a result indigenous people in peninsular Malaysia had very little ability to participate in decisions that affected them.

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<sup>106</sup> 'Penang's sole Indian village under threat', *New Straits Times*, 7 June 2009, CX229184

<sup>107</sup> 'International Religious Freedom Report 2008,' *Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, United States Department of State*, 19 September 2008, CISNET

<sup>108</sup> 'Malaysia Religion', *Global Security*, CX230987

<sup>109</sup> '2008 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Malaysia', *United States Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor*, 25 February 2009, CISNET

<sup>110</sup> 'World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples: Orang Asli', *Minority Rights Group International*, 2003, CX215267

<sup>111</sup> '2008 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Malaysia', *United States Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor*, 25 February 2009, CISNET

The government did not effectively protect indigenous persons' civil and political rights.'<sup>112</sup>

#### *Land Rights*

The lifestyle, culture and land of indigenous Malays is reported to be under threat of government 'land grabs.'<sup>113</sup> Under the 1954 Aboriginal Peoples Act, Orang Asli are granted rights to live on designated land as 'tenants,' able to use land and resources but with no ownership rights.<sup>114 115</sup> 'Observers reported that over the years, the total area of land reserved for Orang Asli had decreased, and some land previously set aside as Orang Asli reserve was rezoned for development.'<sup>116</sup> According to Minority Rights Group International the Aboriginal Peoples Act is too weak to protect the rights of Malaysia's Orang Asli. Due to the Orang Asli's lack of claim to land, they are highly vulnerable to exploitation by logging companies who continue to encroach on their land.<sup>117</sup>

In November 2008, however, the government decided that 'about 20,000 families from Malaysia's Orang Asli tribes will obtain permanent ownership of nearly 50,000 hectares of rural land that currently belongs to state governments and is near their settlements,'<sup>118</sup>

#### *Religion*

According to the USDS, the Malaysian government has targeted the Orang Asli for 'conversion to Islam by a number of local government programmes and state-funded missionaries in parts of Malaysia, such as the state of Kelantan, where rather infamously Muslim men who married an Orang Asli woman would be given 10,000 ringgit. There are no available figures on the impact of these more recent measures on the Orang Asli.'<sup>119</sup>

### **RELIGION AND ETHNICITY**

The media has reported extensively on the 'growing unease' among ethnic minorities regarding the Islamisation of Malaysia, particularly in regard to legal issues relating to divorce, child custody and religious conversions.<sup>120</sup> When he was Deputy Prime Minister, Razak declared Malaysia to be an Islamic state, sparking widespread public debate and fear that the (secular) Constitution was under threat.<sup>121</sup>

#### *Religious Conversion*

As a result of a number of cases of disputes in families due to religious conversion, in April 2009, the cabinet reviewed the situation and found that:

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<sup>112</sup> '2008 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Malaysia', *United States Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor*, 25 February 2009, CISNET

<sup>113</sup> 'Malaysia's indigenous people battle to hold ancestral lands', *Agence France Presse*, 25 July 2007, CX229540

<sup>114</sup> '2008 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Malaysia', *United States Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor*, 25 February 2009, CISNET

<sup>115</sup> 'World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples: Orang Asli', *Minority Rights Group International*, 2003, CX215267

<sup>116</sup> '2008 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Malaysia', *United States Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor*, 25 February 2009, CISNET

<sup>117</sup> '2008 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Malaysia', *United States Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor*, 25 February 2009, CISNET

<sup>118</sup> 'M'sian tribes to own land', *Associated Press*, 19 November 2008, CX229336

<sup>119</sup> 'World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples: Orang Asli', *Minority Rights Group International*, 2003, CX215267

<sup>120</sup> 'Malaysia conversion laws not enough, lawyer says', *Reuters*, 1 May 2009, CX225364

<sup>121</sup> 'Racial divisions sharper after 50 years', *Inter Press Service*, 6 August 2007, CX182637

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‘Civil courts are the right place to dissolve a marriage in the event of a spouse converting to Islam. It also decided that if either spouse were to convert to Islam, the children should follow the faith that the parents had agreed on at the time of marriage, or implied by their common religion. The cabinet has directed the attorney-general to review and propose changes to the law to prevent any future complications to the family unit when a spouse converted to Islam.’<sup>122</sup>

It had been suggested by former prime minister, Badawi that legislation be introduced ‘to prevent religious conflicts among families by requiring converts to Islam to inform their relatives of their change in religion.’<sup>123</sup> No legislation has yet been passed.

There are numerous examples of ‘Legal problems [...] when ethnic Malays convert to another religion or in family disputes between Malays and non-Malays.’<sup>124</sup> In March 2009 it was reported that an ethnic Chinese man was fighting for custody of his child whose custody had been granted to his wife by a Shari’a court after she secretly converted herself and her child to Islam. The couple had married as Buddhists. The lawyer in this case criticised ‘the Islamic authorities for allowing the baby's conversion without first determining the child's custody or the status of the couple's marriage.’<sup>125</sup> In another widely reported case, an ethnic Indian woman lost custody of her children when her husband converted to Islam along with their children. In this case it was argued that it was not possible for the civil court to make a ruling as the civil laws did not apply given the conversions were approved by a Shari’a court.<sup>126</sup> In another case, a separated Hindu couple went to court over the custody of their child after the husband converted to Islam. Following a number of court proceedings and appeals, the final Federal Court finding was the Muslim-convert husband had the right to convert their minor children without the mother’s permission. In February 2008, it was reported that the mother had not seen her oldest son for almost two years since her husband converted both himself and their son to Islam.<sup>127</sup>

In addition to child custody disputes, ‘body-snatching’ in which ‘Islamic authorities have battled with relatives over the remains of people whose religion is disputed, are common in Muslim-majority Malaysia.’<sup>128</sup> In 2005, a Shari’a court found that an Indian man was a Muslim when he died and therefore should be buried according to Islamic tradition; his wife claimed he had not converted to Islam from Hinduism and took the matter to the High Court, which found it did not have jurisdiction over matters related to Islam.<sup>129</sup> In a recent case, an ethnic Indian family of the Sikh faith fought to obtain the remains of their relative who Islamic authorities say converted to Islam before his death,<sup>130</sup> in July 2009, after a month long battle in courts; he was buried according to Islamic tradition.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> ‘A civil solution on conversions’, *New Straits Times*, 24 April 2009, CX224984

<sup>123</sup> ‘M'sian man fights baby's secret conversion to Islam’, *Agence France Presse*, 5 March 2009, CX222886

<sup>124</sup> ‘Malaysia Religion’, *Global Security*, CX230987

<sup>125</sup> ‘M'sian man fights baby's secret conversion to Islam’, *Agence France Presse*, 5 March 2009, CX222886

<sup>126</sup> ‘Fight over kids' conversion’, *Straits Times*, 20 April 2009, CX224687

<sup>127</sup> ‘Court decisions in Malaysia threaten Non-Muslim rights’, *Compass Direct*, 6 February 2008, CX192713

<sup>128</sup> ‘Malaysian Sikh family in new 'bodysnatching' case’, *Agence France Presse*, 1 March 2009, CX227351

<sup>129</sup> ‘Freedom in the World - Malaysia (2007)’, *Freedom House*, 2007, CX192375

<sup>130</sup> ‘Malaysian Sikh family in new 'bodysnatching' case’, *Agence France Presse*, 1 March 2009, CX227351

<sup>131</sup> ‘Mohan Singh given Islamic burial’, *Bernama*, 7 July 2009, CX229528

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