

MALAYSIA

Dates of Elections: August 24 to September 14, 1974

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the members of the House of Representatives. Previous elections had been held in May 1969 and, following their suspension, in June and July 1970. The dissolution of Parliament on July 31, 1974, was therefore a premature one.

Characteristics of Parliament

The bicameral Parliament of Malaysia consists of a House of Representatives (*Dewan Ra'ayat*) and a Senate (*Dewan Negara*).

The House of Representatives comprises 154 members elected for a maximum of 5 years. (This total increased from 144 following the creation, from February 1, 1974, of the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur). Of these, 109 come from the 11 States of Malaya, 24 from Sarawak, 16 from Sabah and 5 from the Federal Territory.

The Senate comprises 60 members. Of these, 28, or 2 elected by each one of the country's 13 State Assemblies and the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur, are elected. The remaining 32 are appointed by the *Yang di-Pertuan Agong*, or Supreme Head of the Federation of Malaysia, from among persons who in his opinion have rendered distinguished public service or have achieved distinction in the professions, commerce, industry, agriculture, cultural activities or social service; who are representative of racial minorities; or who are capable of representing the interests of aborigines. Senators serve for a period of 6 years, but the Senate is not subject to dissolution.

Electoral System

Every citizen who has attained the age of 21 and who is on the " qualifying date " (date by reference to which the electoral rolls are prepared or revised) resident in a constituency or, if not so resident, is classed as an " absent voter " (one who is registered as an absent voter in respect of that constituency) is entitled to vote in that constituency in any election to the House of Representatives. A person is disqualified from being an elector if on the qualifying date he is detained as a person of unsound mind, is serving a sentence of imprisonment, or remains liable, pursuant to a conviction in any

part of the British Commonwealth, to a sentence of death or imprisonment for a term exceeding 12 months.

Electoral registers are drawn up at the constituency level and are revised annually. Voting is not compulsory. Postal voting is permitted for absent voters, members of the police force, those liable for certain duties on polling day and members of the Election Commission.

Every citizen resident in the Federation is qualified to be a member of the House of Representatives if he is not less than 21 years old and of the Senate if at least 30 years old. A person is disqualified from being a member of either House of Parliament if he owes allegiance to a foreign State, is insane or an undischarged bankrupt, or has been convicted and sentenced to imprisonment for a term of not less than one year or to a fine of not less than M\$ 2,000. Persons holding an " office of profit " (a full-time office in any of the public services, such as the office of any judge of the Federal Court or of a High Court, of Auditor-General, or of a member of the Election Commission) may for their part not simultaneously be members of Parliament.

Each candidate to Parliament — who need not necessarily be a member of a recognized political party — must be supported by 6 registered electors of his constituency. A candidate to the House of Representatives must make a monetary deposit of M\$ 1,000, which is reimbursed should the candidate poll more than 1/8 of the total number of votes polled by all the candidates in the constituency. A candidate to Parliament must lodge a return of campaign expenses within the time and in the manner required by law.

Representatives are elected in 154 single-member constituencies by a simple majority. Names of candidates, their parties (if any), and party symbols all appear on the ballot paper.

By-elections are held, or appointments made, within 60 days, to fill parliamentary seats which become vacant between general elections. Representatives' seats which become vacant within 6 months of the scheduled dissolution of Parliament are not filled.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

Once Parliament had been dissolved on July 31, 1974, the Election Commission fixed August 8, 1974, as Nomination Day and August 24, 1974, as Polling Day. (In Malaysia, the election campaign must last a minimum of two weeks.)

The election for the House of Representatives was combined with that for 12 State Assemblies. In accordance with the constitutional requirement that

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polling take place in the Borneo States within 30 days of that held in the States of Malaya, voting continued until September 9 in Sabah and September 14 in Sarawak.

For the Representatives' seats, the ruling National Front (*Barisan Nasional*) — a grouping of 12 rather diverse parties (7 Malayan and 5 from Sarawak and Sabah) — was opposed by, *inter alia*, the Democratic Action Party (DAP), the mainly Malay People's Socialist Party (PSRM), the moderate Social Justice Party (*Pekemas*), and by a total of 42 independent candidates.

The National Front, led by Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak, sought a clear victory so that its plans and programmes formulated to forge national unity through national development might be continued. It called for a New Economic Policy aiming at " a just, liberal and progressive society in which all the people, whatever their racial origin, would have an equal opportunity to enjoy the material well-being of the nation ". Both *Pekemas* and the Chinese-oriented DAP stressed the need for equality and justice among the country's different communities. All parties were, however, limited to a great extent in talking about communal matters by the Sedition Laws which forbade discussion of certain racially sensitive issues. This code of conduct was generally acknowledged as an important factor in making for a much more peaceful campaign than that for the previous elections.

The Prime Minister was among the 47 National Front candidates to Parliament who were returned unopposed on Nomination Day. Another 88 Front members were later successful, thus enabling their alliance to gain an overwhelming majority in the House. Altogether over 50 Opposition candidates lost their deposits.

Prime Minister Tun Razak's Cabinet, enlarged to 21 members, was sworn in on September 5, 1974.

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Statistics

1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the House of Representatives

Number of registered voters.	3
Voters.	2
Blank or void ballot papers.	2
Valid votes.	2

* Candidates were returned unopposed in 47 constituencies. The 1,060,871 electors therefore did not cast ballots.

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained	%	Number of Seats
	154	1,287,400	60.81	13
Democratic Action Party (DAP)	46	387,845	18.32	
Sarawak National Party (SNAP)	24	117,566	5.55	
Social Justice Party (<i>Pekemas</i>)	36	105,718	4.99	
Malaysian People's Socialist Party (PSRM)	22	84,206	3.97	
KITA Party	4	8,623	.04	—
Independent People's Progressive Party (IPPP)	1	1,356	.006	
	42	124,202	5.86	—
				15

10 seats added since last elections.

The National Front did not exist at the time of the previous elections. Instead, parties (UMNO, MIA & MIC) which in 1969 won 66 seats. Subsequent to the election (PPP and *Oerakan*), 2 Sarawak groups (SUPP and the Sarawak Alliance Party) and the Alliance to form the National Front.

Did not exist at the time of the previous elections.

2. Distribution of Representatives according to Sex

Men.	149
Women.	5
	154