

MALAYSIA

Polity5 regime codes:

fac	scode	polity	pers	bmon	bday	byear	emon	eday	eyear	exec	exconst	polcomp
0a	MAL	7	2	8	31	1957	8	20	1959	7	6	9
0b	MAL	7	10	8	21	1959	5	15	1969	8	5	9
1X	MAL	1	2	5	16	1969	2	19	1971	7	3	6
1Xa	MAL	4	26	2	20	1971	10	11	1996	7	5	6
1Xb	MAL	3	12	10	12	1996	3	7	2008	7	4	6
1Xc	MAL	6	6	3	8	2008	3	6	2014	8	5	7
1Xd	MAL	5	4	3	7	2014	5	9	2018	8	5	6
1O	MAL	7	1	5	10	2018	99	99	9999	8	5	9

PITF Problem Events:

1) 05/69-05/1969 (ARC 05/69)

0a) August 31, 1957 (independence) – The original institutions of the government of the Federation of Malaya, which became the Federation of Malaysia on August 31, 1963, upon the ascension of Singapore and the northern Borneo territories of Sabah, Sarawak, and Brunei (Singapore and Brunei subsequently seceded), were greatly influenced by Britain’s Reid Commission. It was initially set up as a constitutional monarchy with a head of state elected from among the hereditary rulers of the Malay states and a head of government chosen by the majority in the lower house of the parliament; however, the prime minister quickly emerged as the ruling executive, with the monarch relegated to a ceremonial role. Political participation and organization were fairly well developed in the years prior to independence.

0b) August 21, 1959 (general elections) – The Federation of Malaya’s first general elections were held on August 21, 1959, and were contested by six political parties; however, the Alliance Party comprising the United Malays' National Organization, the Malayan Chinese Association, and the Malayan Indian Congress dominated the parliament, winning 73 of 104 seats.

1X) Date of Change to Factional-Democratic: May 16, 1969 (general elections)

Brief Explanation of Change To:

Adverse Regime Change: May 1969

Malaysia's third general elections since independence accentuated the growing dissatisfaction of the large ethnic-Chinese community with the ruling Alliance Party. Violent communal rioting between Malays and Chinese in Kuala Lumpur after the elections led to imposition of a State of Emergency; the creation of a National Operations Council to maintain order; the formation of a new Government in which, for the first time, there were no representatives of the ethnic-Chinese community; and cancellation of elections in Sabah and Sarawak.

Identify Main Factions:

- *United Malays National Front (UMNO)* — The leading political party in Malaysia is the United Malays National Organization (UMNO); its primary mission is to ensure the *bhumiputritization* of Malaysian politics (i.e., the dominance of secular, ethnic-Malays). The UMNO is the dominant party in a coalition called the National Front (Barisan Nasional), which is designed to coopt activists and channel political action while providing an organizational forum for the representation of Malaysia’s broad and varied political interests. The hegemonic National Front

has dominated the country's politics since 1970. The front comprises 14 political parties that represent Malaysia's major ethnic groups and is controlled by the ethnic-Malay UMNO. Over time, this coalition has used central authority to restrict access to resources and mobilization opportunities for dissident groups and those criticizing the government for oppressive and corrupt policies.

- *Unsanctioned Political Organizations* — Oppositional politics, while not formally banned, are effectively controlled through a strategy of issue adoption/concession, cooptation of leaders, and restrictions on the political mobilization of dissent. Oppositional parties, such as Islamic fundamentalists represented by the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS) and pro-Singapore Chinese represented by the Democratic Action Party (DAP), do contest elections and gain seats in parliament but their influence is closely monitored and not allowed to grow to the point where it might challenge UMNO preeminence.

Changes within Factional-Restricted Period:

1Xa) February 20, 1971 (lifting of state of emergency) – Following the lifting on February 19, 1971, of the state of emergency imposed by the government in response to the May 1969 election unrest, under which parliament had been suspended, the Legislature was reconvened on February 20, 1971.

1Xb) October 12, 1996 (party elections) – During UMNO's triennial party elections, support for Prime Minister Mahathir increased considerably at the expense of the "Vision Team" led by Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Anwar Ibrahim, who had been viewed as the likely successor to Mahathir as party leader. Ibrahim was subsequently dismissed and arrested in September 1998, effectively ending his reform movement.

1Xc) March 8, 2008 (parliamentary elections) – Dominance of Malaysian politics by the National Front (BN) led by the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) had continued since 1969 through the effective maintenance of a "carrot-and-stick" approach to controlling a divided opposition. The softening of government restrictions under Prime Minister Badawi and the failure to thwart to rise of Anwar Ibrahim as a unifying leader of the opposition resulted in a more cohesive challenge and major gains by opposition parties in March 8, 2008, parliamentary elections.

1Xd) March 7, 2014 (crackdown on dissent) – Having narrowly avoided electoral defeat despite losing the popular vote through a gerrymandered victory in parliamentary elections held on May 5, 2013, the UMNO/*Barisan Nasional* government led by Prime Minister Najib Razak faced increasing popular protests led by the opposition *Pakatan Rakyat* led by Anwar Ibrahim. On March 7, 2014, government authorities initiated a systematic crackdown on the opposition and arrested many of its top leaders. However, opposition to the Razak's government continued to strengthen, particularly in response to the exposure of corruption tied to the 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) fund that was alleged to have channeled enormous government funds to Najib's private accounts.

2O) Date of Change from Factional-Democratic: May 10, 2018 (new government)

Brief Explanation of Change From:

The United Malay National Organization (UMNO) had ruled Malaysia since independence in 1957 and as a hegemonic party since putting down the electoral crisis of 1969. Popular support for the UMNO regime had continued to diminish since the September 1998 dismissal and arrest of the reformist Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim and especially after revelations of the July 2015 1MDB corruption scandal tied to Prime Minister Najib Razak. An agreement between Anwar Ibrahim and the former UMNO Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, who had deposed him in 1998, resulted in a broad coalition, *Pakatan Harapan*, that finally succeeded in ousting the UMNO-dominated regime in general elections held on May 9, 2018. Mahatir, who had previously served as prime minister from July 1981 through October 2003, was sworn into office on May 10, 2018. Najib was arrested by the new government on July 3, 2018.