

04 / 06 / 2024

# Malaysia

## Chinese Digital Influence in Southeast Asia



**CRC**

CYFLUENCE  
RESEARCH  
CENTER

# Introduction

## Executive Summary

In the fourth part of our ongoing series on Chinese Influence in Southeast Asia, our Focus shifts to Malaysia. As with all papers in this series, the aim is to create a foundation upon which more detailed research can be conducted in the form of specific case studies.

Numerous factors contribute to Malaysia being a focal point for influence operations. The nation boasts the fifth largest economy in Southeast Asia, representing approximately 12% of the region's GDP. With substantial deposits of tin and oil along with ranking as the 11th largest producer of bauxite and manganese, Malaysia holds significant natural resource wealth. Additionally, it also holds the third largest gas reserve in the Asia-Pacific region, following China and Indonesia. Malaysia's economic landscape is characterized by robust agricultural and manufacturing sectors.

Geopolitically, Malaysia occupies a pivotal position at the intersection of the South China Sea and Indian Ocean, making it also strategically significant. The Malacca Strait, a crucial maritime route linking the two regions, traverses along the Malaysian coastline. Moreover, Malaysia faces territorial disputes, particularly with China's claims based on the controversial nine-dash line, which encroaches upon Malaysian territories in the states of Sabah and Sarawak, off the coast of Borneo.

## Historical Overview

The historical ties between Malaysia and China go back hundreds of years. For the sake of this historical context, a few central facts should be mentioned at the outset. In the early period of the Ming Dynasty (1368 – 1644), China began focusing on establishing secure international trade routes. This inevitably brought them to the sultanate of Malacca, who controlled the geo-strategically important sea route between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea: The Malacca Strait. The sultanate of Malacca became a tributary to the Chinese and in return gaining the protection of the Ming Dynasty, thus allowing it to prosper. The arrival of the Portuguese in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century led directly to both the downfall of the Sultanate of Malacca and of the Chinese control over the region.

There has been Chinese immigration to what constitutes today's Malaysia for hundreds of years. Arguably, the largest waves were in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, during the colonial rule of the British. Presently, Ethnic Chinese make up roughly 22% of the total Malaysian population. The majority of which are concentrated in urban areas such as Kuala Lumpur, where they constitute over 40% of the city's population.

Tensions between the Malay and Chinese ethnicities played a prominent role in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Malaysia. During the Malay Emergency from 1948 to 1960, a communist insurgency, constituted of mainly ethnic Chinese members, ravaged the country. In parallel, the economic success of many of the ethnic Chinese led to heightened resentment within the Malay population. These tensions culminated in the May 13<sup>th</sup> Incident of 1969, where a string of riots led to the deaths of several hundred in Kuala Lumpur. In the aftermath

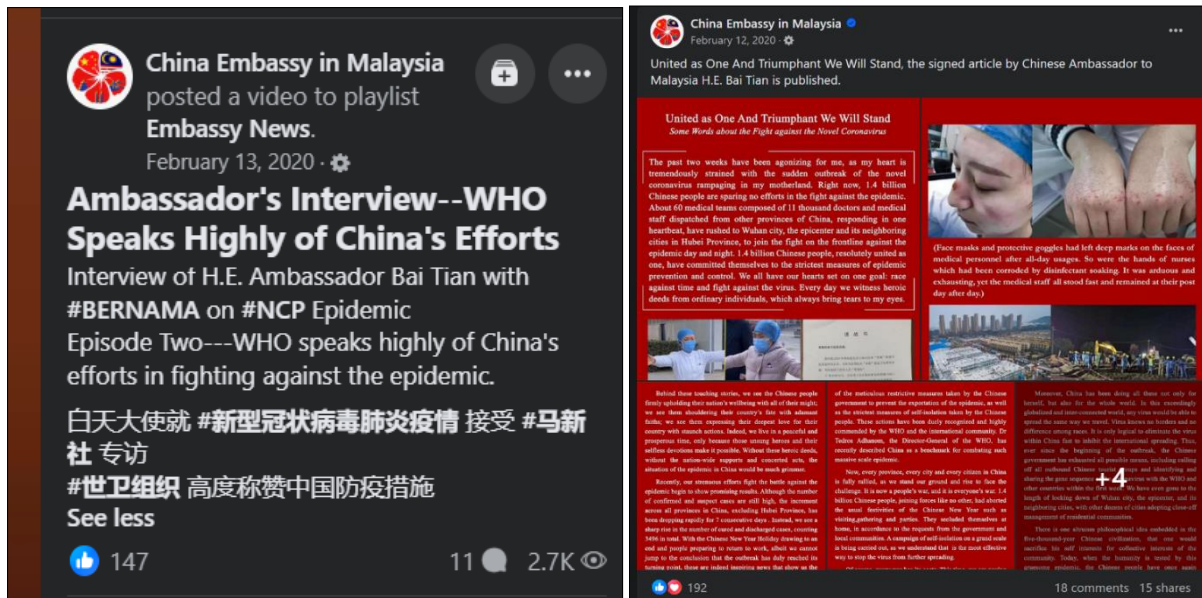
of the riots, the Malaysian government implemented the New Economic Policy (NEP) of 1971, aimed at reducing economic disparities by favoring Malays in education, employment, and business opportunities. The NEP and its' successors have led to sustained tensions between the Malay and Chinese ethnic groups until today.

Diplomatic relations between the People's Republic of China and Malaysia were officially established in 1974. This only began warming with the end of the cold war and with China ending its support of communist insurgencies across the globe. Following these changes, China quickly became a major investor in and a key economic partner to Malaysia. China's unilateral territorial claims in the South China Sea, based on the nine-dash line, overlap with Malaysia's claims and have led to heightened tensions in recent years. Malaysia has been emphasizing dialogue over confrontation. While the situation has been relatively calm in comparison to the dispute between the Philippines and China, Malaysia has nevertheless filed official complaints against China, even summoning the Chinese Ambassador in 2021 over the Chinese maritime activity in Malaysia's exclusive economic zone off Sarawak and Sabah.

## Online Influence

Chinese sources target Malaysian audiences with standard Chinese narratives that mix positive promotion of China and its governance model with the Chinese counter-narratives to criticism. Chinese officials publicly emphasize what they refer to as continued “friendship” between Malaysia and China and stress that initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative provide a benefit to both countries<sup>1</sup>. The topic of the South China Sea is repeatedly used by Chinese sources, which place emphasis on China’s efforts to maintain peace and stability, while emphasizing the outside forces as either seeking control in the region or as portraying China as an aggressor unfairly<sup>2</sup>.

COVID-19 was also a recurring theme in Chinese narratives deployed in Malaysia at the Malaysian audiences throughout 2020 and 2021. China was presented as a helping friend that distributes vaccines and assistance to BRI partners including Malaysia. The World Health Organization (WHO) was referenced to legitimize China’s narrative about its excellent behavior in the early months of the pandemic.<sup>3 4</sup>



<sup>1</sup> <https://freedomhouse.org/country/malaysia/beijings-global-media-influence/2022>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202106/21/WS60cfe7bea31024ad0baca42e.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/chinaembmy/videos/555419758515079/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/chinaembmy/posts/pfbid02SjfZzogUg8EPWQx39ZudqBTKEi4f5PXhbTdDoXeZZP34Wum54GiMtNpqjYWadiPl>

## Chinese Official Accounts and Chinese State Media

A specific narrative piece is referred to by official Chinese sources targeted at the Malaysian audiences is Xinjiang. The Chinese government utilizes its capabilities to discredit evidence of mass detentions and other abuses in Xinjiang. This topic is of importance to Muslim Malaysians, who comprise a significant part of the population (around 63% of the population<sup>5</sup>). The Chinese government, through state media and officials, presents itself as a protector of religious freedoms, and that the Xinjiang region is a popular tourist destination. These positive narratives include highlights of how Islamic culture is similarly celebrated in China and Malaysia.<sup>6</sup>



<sup>5</sup> <https://www.statista.com/statistics/594657/religious-affiliation-in-malaysia/>

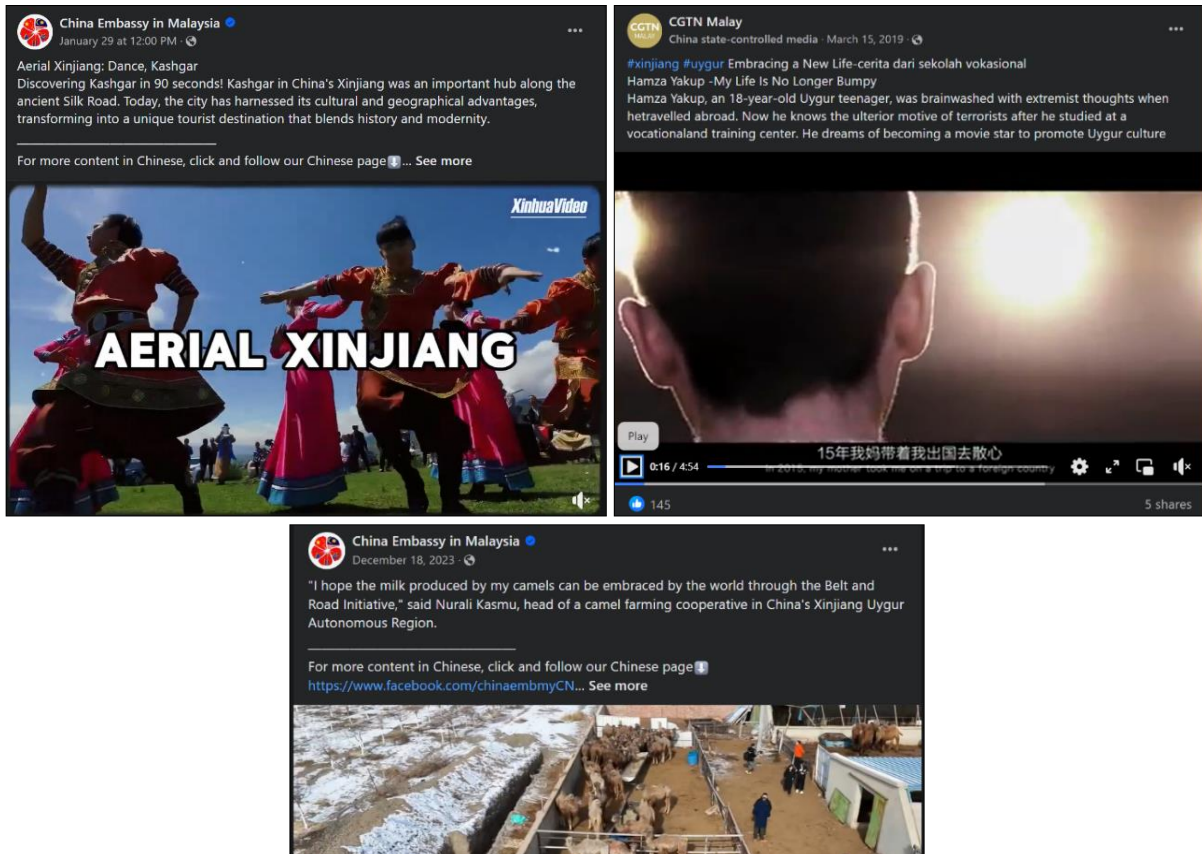
<sup>6</sup> [https://freedomhouse.org/country/malaysia/beijings-global-media-influence/2022#footnoteref6\\_m2g8dbm](https://freedomhouse.org/country/malaysia/beijings-global-media-influence/2022#footnoteref6_m2g8dbm)

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.mfa.gov.cn/eng/xwfw\\_665399/s2510\\_665401/2535\\_665405/202308/t20230809\\_11124439.html](https://www.mfa.gov.cn/eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2535_665405/202308/t20230809_11124439.html)

<sup>8</sup> <https://eng.yidaiyilu.gov.cn/p/067E4VNT.html>

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/asiapacific/2021-03/20/c\\_139823552.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/asiapacific/2021-03/20/c_139823552.htm)

Chinese sourced social media posts about Xinjiang<sup>10 11 12</sup>:



It is also important to note that ethnic Han Chinese represent Malaysia’s largest minority, of over 7 million. This explains the Chinese language use in Malaysia, hence Chinese language media can be considered part of the mainstream media landscape of Malaysia. There are Chinese-language media sources in Malaysia, including Sin Chew Daily, China Press, Nanyang Siang Pau, and Guang Ming, that are owned by Media China International. These media sources published and spread disinformation regarding Hong Kong’s 2019-2020 pro-democracy movement, the unfounded narrative of protesters with Molotov cocktails attacking a school bus, and that an American diplomat directed the protesters.<sup>13</sup>

CGTN Malay is a Chinese state media source targeting the majority Malay-speaking population on Facebook, comprising more than 1.5 million followers. The Facebook page is key to amplifying China’s agenda regarding different narrative subjects in the Malay language.<sup>14 15</sup>:

<sup>10</sup><https://www.facebook.com/cgtnmalay/posts/pfbid02qupi81KVD6qu7FtteEVFrzH5F5m9wGhEyzGCCVdDuFMGEg1qabxPZTvhGAIcsgNLI>

<sup>11</sup><https://www.facebook.com/chinaembmy/videos/324318719968709/>

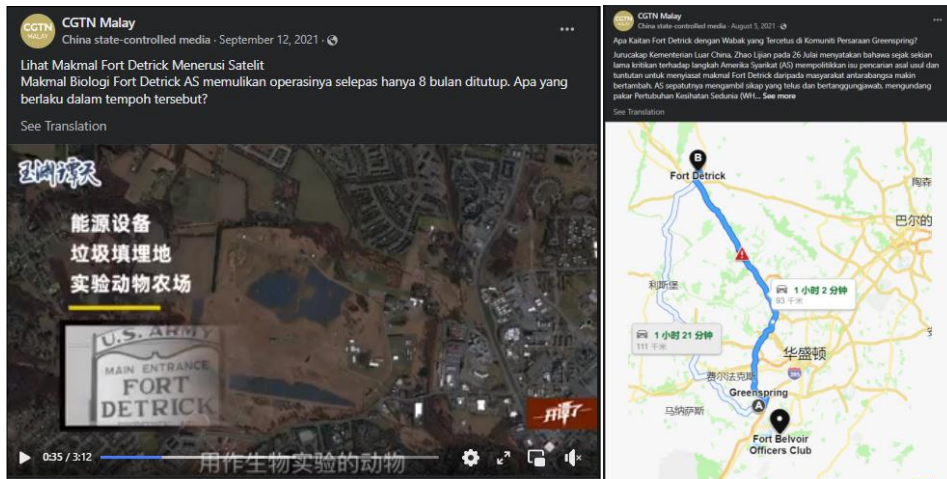
<sup>12</sup><https://www.facebook.com/chinaembmy/videos/1416908578859596/>

<sup>13</sup>[https://freedomhouse.org/country/malaysia/beijings-global-media-influence/2022#footnote32\\_oabppp6](https://freedomhouse.org/country/malaysia/beijings-global-media-influence/2022#footnote32_oabppp6)

<sup>14</sup><https://www.facebook.com/cgtnmalay/posts/pfbid035WKXyGWJ31fAyEzDotCNLNRmLUkH6iXf6ntigZJQhLDUub2HJbkm6tH5tfkwYp9WSI>

<sup>15</sup><https://www.facebook.com/cgtnmalay/posts/pfbid02zTXafv4X5YLomcgGrgfaYMHwNudC7fX9ynb2uSB5tKwamDjkipvwQx177UNpC9BI>

The same page promoted disinformation regarding COVID-19 as well<sup>16 17</sup>:



The official page of the Chinese embassy in Malaysia on Facebook posted disinformation regarding COVID-19 in the past<sup>18</sup>:



In addition, The Chinese ambassadors to Malaysia wrote multiple op-eds<sup>19</sup> on issues such as COVID-19, the BRI, Xinjiang, among others. Former ambassador Bai Tian wrote 15 such op-eds. Many Malaysian news sources, such as Sin Chew Daily, The Star, Malay Mail, Sinar Harian, and others, published these commentary articles in English, Chinese, and Malay. The current Chinese ambassador, Ouyang Yujing, is following this procedure as well, for instance:

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/cgtnmalay/videos/903415880267769/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/cgtnmalay/posts/pfbid035WktwKAVbDbYwZsJJY3zdcBATZHZDemSfoJg6sjKHxMeH Wdm544niZNdn4LFznAyl>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/chinaembmy/videos/1162683297414747/>

<sup>19</sup> An op-ed piece is a short newspaper column that represents the opinion of a writer on an issue of relevance to a targeted audience. It is a written prose piece which expresses the opinion of an author or entity with no affiliation with the publication's editorial board. The term is short for "opposite the editorial page", referring to the practice of newspapers placing op-eds on the opposite side of their editorial page.



20

Malaysian media republish Chinese state media content, thus promotionally spreading the Chinese agenda. Other such articles that were originally reported by Chinese state media agency Xinhua:<sup>21 22</sup>



<sup>20</sup> [http://my.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/sgxw/202307/t20230705\\_11108742.htm](http://my.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/sgxw/202307/t20230705_11108742.htm)

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.buletintv3.my/dunia/ekonomi-gawat-jepun-hilang-status-ekonomi-ketiga-terbesar-dunia/>

<sup>22</sup> <https://m.sinarharian.com.my/mobile-article?articleid=112916>



## Articles by Xinhua republished by The Star:

**WORLD** 20 Feb 2024 | 08:04 PM

### UN humanitarian agency appeals for 2.6 billion USD to respond to alarming crisis in DR Congo

KINSHASA, Feb. 20 (Xinhua) -- The government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and its humanitarian partners have launched an appeal for 2.6 billion U.S. dollars to fund the country's 2024 humanitarian response plan.

---

**WORLD** 20 Feb 2024 | 06:54 PM

### UN agencies step up efforts to promote breastfeeding in Africa

NAIROBI, Feb. 20 (Xinhua) -- The World Health Organization (WHO), in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), has enhanced efforts across Africa to advance the implementation of the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) in countries to promote breastfeeding.

---

**WORLD** 20 Feb 2024 | 06:48 PM

### Zambia announces restrictions on maize exports

LUSAKA, Feb. 20 (Xinhua) -- The Zambian government on Tuesday announced a restriction on the export of maize and mealie meal due to a prolonged dry spell that could affect the harvest.

---

**WORLD** 20 Feb 2024 | 06:38 PM

### Indonesia's new copyright regulation requires platforms to pay press companies for contents

JAKARTA, Feb. 20 (Xinhua) -- Indonesian President Joko Widodo said Tuesday that the government has issued a regulation on publishers' rights which aims to set business relations between digital platforms and mass media in terms of content publications.

---

**WORLD** 20 Feb 2024 | 06:37 PM

### Tanzania's commercial hub of Dar es Salaam gets World Bank credit boost to improve infrastructure

DAR ES SALAAM, Feb. 20 (Xinhua) -- The World Bank on Tuesday approved a 361.1 million euros (about 390 million U.S. dollars) credit for the implementation of the second phase of the Dar es Salaam Metropolitan Development Project (DMDP).

---

**WORLD** 20 Feb 2024 | 06:34 PM

### Zimbabwe starts polio vaccination campaign, targeting 4 mln children

HARARE, Feb. 20 (Xinhua) -- The Zimbabwean government, in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization, on Tuesday launched a nationwide polio vaccination campaign targeting about 4 million children under the age of 10.

---

**WORLD** 20 Feb 2024 | 06:34 PM

### Roundup: Turkish gold coin production hits record high amid inflation

ISTANBUL, Feb. 20 (Xinhua) -- Türkiye produced a record number of quarter gold coins in 2023, as Turkish consumers sought to preserve their savings amid soaring inflation, official data showed on Monday.

---

Xinhua and People's Daily both have physical offices in Malaysia.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> [https://freedomhouse.org/country/malaysia/beijings-global-media-influence/2022#footnoteref32\\_oabppp6](https://freedomhouse.org/country/malaysia/beijings-global-media-influence/2022#footnoteref32_oabppp6)

## Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior

In terms of inauthentic coordinated activity, Malaysia has a long history of political actors' efforts to manipulate public opinion online. The Atlantic Council, an American non-partisan research organization, published in 2020 a report about content farms<sup>24</sup> that are based in Malaysia and targeted Malaysian audiences.<sup>25</sup> One content farm posted pro-China content across different Facebook accounts, pages, and groups that focused efforts on Malaysian politics in a coordinated campaign. See examples of inauthentic coordinated behavior as reported by the Atlantic Council. The screenshots depict coordinated posting on Facebook and a table of twenty-five Facebook pages that posted a link to Chinese media sources in a coordinated campaign:



Four example screenshots of the coordinated posts reflected in the above table.<sup>21</sup>

Page Name	Translation	Page Created At	Location
全球華人聯盟主頁	Global Chinese Alliance General Page	December 30, 2014	Malaysia (6) China (1) Taiwan (1)
全球華人軍主聯盟	Chinese Chinese Leader Community	February 11, 2015	Malaysia (6)
全球華人實事聯盟	Global Chinese Universe Alliance	November 23, 2015	Malaysia (6) China (1) Taiwan (1)
全球華人最佳聯盟	Global Chinese Best World Alliance	December 2, 2015	Malaysia (6) Taiwan (1)
全球華人科技聯盟	Global Chinese Technology Alliance	December 2, 2015	Malaysia (6) China (2) Not available (1)
全球華人亞洲聯盟	Global Chinese Asia Alliance	March 8, 2016	Malaysia (6) China (1) Not available (1)
全球華人鐵血聯盟	Global Chinese Iron Blood Alliance	March 13, 2016	Malaysia (6)
全球華人領袖聯盟	Global Chinese Leader	March 25, 2016	Malaysia (6)
全球華人風雲聯盟	Global Chinese Alliance	March 25, 2016	Malaysia (6)
天天頭條	Everyday Headline	May 12, 2016	China (1) Malaysia (1) Not available (2)
全球華人領袖聯盟	Global Chinese Iron Alliance	May 17, 2016	Malaysia (6)
繁華中國	Prosperous China	February 21, 2018	China (1) Malaysia (1) Not available (2)
我有中國夢	I have a China Dream	February 21, 2018	China (1) Malaysia (1) Not available (2)
環球瞭望	Look Around	March 1, 2018	N/A
全球華人軍主聯盟	Chinese Chinese Leader Page	March 16, 2018	Malaysia (1)
世界日報	World Daily	April 9, 2018	China (2) Malaysia (1) Taiwan (1)
中國軍武	Chinese Military	April 5, 2019	Malaysia (1)
全球華人風雲聯盟Pro	Global Chinese Alliance Pro	September 23, 2020	N/A
全球華人軍事聯盟Pro	Global Chinese Military Affairs Alliance Pro	September 23, 2020	N/A

DFRLab

Twenty-five pages posted the news link from qigu.pro almost simultaneously, the title which is "Biden tells Trump to shut up immediately, U.S. presidential debate kicks off chaos."<sup>22</sup>

Facebook pages in Chinese that are operated from Malaysia and are targeting Malaysian audiences are still active and managing public Facebook groups targeted at Malaysian audiences as well. for example:



26



27

<sup>24</sup> A content farm is a company that employs large numbers of freelance writers or uses automated tools to generate a large amount of textual web content which is specifically designed to satisfy algorithms for maximal retrieval by search engines, known as SEO.

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/China-Diaspora-FINAL-1.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100034733636551>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/Chinabustling/about>

## Additional Chinese Influence

Malaysia is a founding member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), a region that is geopolitically important to both China and the US in their strategic competition.

Like many other countries in the region, Malaysia strives to utilize its relations with both the US and China to advance its own goals.

China is the number one trading partner of many countries in the region, including Malaysia. China is also an important source of investment, tourism, and other economic opportunities. On the other side, the US is an important security provider in the region, and it seeks to increase its economic relations with countries in the region. Malaysia has security partnerships with the US, which is considered a key player in providing a balancing force against potential aggressive behavior by the Chinese military in the South China Sea.<sup>28</sup>

Malaysia is one of the Southeast Asian countries that rejected China’s “nine-dash line” territorial claim in the South China Sea, which was reiterated by China in August 2023<sup>29</sup>. In September 2023, Malaysia Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said China had given an assurance that it would continue to negotiate with the countries in the region and avoid actions that risked escalation. However, there were maritime clashes between China and the Philippines in 2023 in both October<sup>30</sup> and December.<sup>31</sup> The tensions have increased in Vietnam’s exclusive economic zone (EEZ) following incursions of Chinese vessels<sup>32</sup>. This is yet another indication that China’s statements diverge drastically from its actions and that the countries in the region have become more aware of this.

Aside from the South China Sea territorial dispute, Malaysia appears to be supportive of China’s narratives and agenda. Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim endorsed China’s narrative of “a community with a shared future” in meetings with President Xi and Premier Li Qiang in April 2023. There were reports of Anwar’s support for other major Chinese diplomatic initiatives, such as the Global Development Initiative<sup>33</sup>, the Global Security Initiative,<sup>34</sup> along with the Belt and Road Initiative.<sup>35</sup>

Nevertheless, the “State of Southeast Asia” survey, mentioned in the previous report and available in [Appendix 1](#), shows that the Malaysian population is somewhat wary of China’s behavior in terms of territorial disputes and potential disregard for Malaysian sovereignty. The

<sup>28</sup> <https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/08/21/how-malaysia-views-u.s.-and-chinese-narratives-about-world-order-pub-90409>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/philippines-taiwan-malaysia-reject-chinas-latest-south-china-sea-map-2023-08-31/>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/china-says-it-lawfully-blocked-philippine-ships-going-disputed-shoal-2023-10-22/>

<sup>31</sup> <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/12/13/asia/china-philippines-maritime-standoff-analysis-intl-hnk-ml/index.html>

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.voanews.com/a/tensions-high-as-chinese-vessels-shadow-vietnam-s-oil-and-gas-operations-7141273.html>

<sup>33</sup> [https://www.mfa.gov.cn/eng/topics\\_665678/GDI/wj/202305/P020230511396286957196.pdf](https://www.mfa.gov.cn/eng/topics_665678/GDI/wj/202305/P020230511396286957196.pdf)

<sup>34</sup> [https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/wjbxw/202302/t20230221\\_11028348.html](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjbxw/202302/t20230221_11028348.html)

<sup>35</sup> <https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/08/21/how-malaysia-views-u.s.-and-chinese-narratives-about-world-order-pub-90409>

top desire of regional respondents pessimistic about relations with China (59.8%) is for China to resolve all territorial and maritime disputes peacefully in accordance with international law although this option recorded a slight decline from 64.6% the year before. This is the top choice for Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Vietnam, all of whom (except Singapore) have competing claims with China in the South China Sea<sup>36</sup>.

### Q35 What can China do to improve relations with your country? (check 2 responses)

210 respondents who chose the "Worsen" and "Worsen significantly" options in Q33

Country	China should resolve all territorial and maritime disputes peacefully in accordance with international law		China should make bilateral trade truly mutually beneficial by addressing trade imbalances		Deepen mutual understanding by enhancing people-to-people relations		China should respect my country's sovereignty and not constrain my country's foreign policy choices		The fault lines between my country and China cannot be bridged	
	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023
ASEAN	64.6%	59.8%	33.3%	47.4%	14.8%	31.7%	77.3%	54.2%	10.0%	7.0%
Brunei	66.7%	38.5%	33.3%	23.1%	0.0%	46.2%	100.0%	61.5%	0.0%	30.8%
Cambodia	80.0%	20.0%	20.0%	80.0%	20.0%	40.0%	80.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Indonesia	63.2%	72.2%	52.6%	61.1%	15.8%	11.1%	57.9%	55.6%	10.5%	0.0%
Laos	50.0%	12.5%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	75.0%	100.0%	37.5%	0.0%	25.0%
Malaysia	52.0%	73.3%	36.0%	33.3%	28.0%	20.0%	72.0%	73.3%	12.0%	0.0%
Myanmar	42.9%	60.7%	29.0%	75.0%	26.8%	51.8%	74.0%	12.5%	27.3%	0.0%
Philippines	94.5%	84.8%	19.6%	33.3%	4.9%	9.1%	79.1%	66.7%	1.8%	6.1%
Singapore	72.2%	85.7%	13.9%	23.8%	25.0%	23.8%	80.6%	61.9%	8.3%	4.8%
Thailand	35.3%	57.1%	52.9%	64.3%	23.5%	28.6%	70.6%	50.0%	17.6%	0.0%
Vietnam	88.9%	92.6%	25.9%	29.6%	3.7%	11.1%	59.3%	63.0%	22.2%	3.7%

According to the China Index by Doublethink Lab organization, Malaysia was the tenth most influenced country by China's efforts across nine different fields<sup>37</sup>.

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.iseas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/The-State-of-SEA-2023-Final-Digital-V4-09-Feb-2023.pdf>

<sup>37</sup> <https://china-index.io/country/malaysia>

**Overall Score**

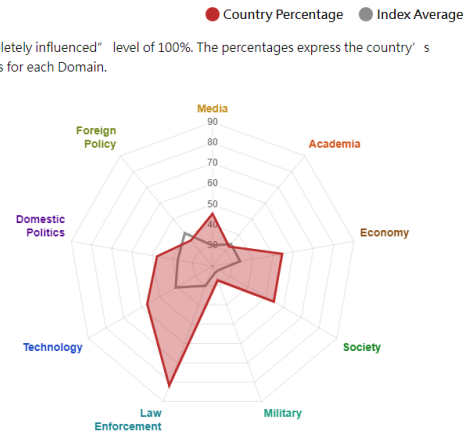
Overall scores measure the PRC's overall influence in the Index countries. Click on the dropdown button to compare the PRC's influence in each of the nine Domains.

Rank	Country	Score
9	Tajikistan	194/396
10	Malaysia	189/388
11	Taiwan	182/380
12	Australia	180/388
13	South Korea	175/388

Domain Scores

Percentage scores do not suggest some degree out of a "completely influenced" level of 100%. The percentages express the country's score out of the total achievable amount based on the Indicators for each Domain.

Media	45.5% / 30.1%
Academia	32.5% / 34%
Economy	54.5% / 33.6%
Society	54.5% / 23.6%
Military	27.3% / 23.4%
Law Enforcement	81.8% / 30.2%
Technology	56.8% / 40.8%
Domestic Politics	47.5% / 37.2%
Foreign Policy	36.4% / 41%



As you see in the graph, the fields that were influenced the most by China are law enforcement and technology sector. Key instances<sup>38</sup>:

- In Malaysia, there are journalists, media organizations, or online influencers who have received training from Chinese state-owned media or China-connected entities.
- Chinese state media (including print, radio, and video) is broadcasted or distributed in a local language.
- There are journalists who have had pressure exerted on them by China, including (but not limited to) public denouncement, revocation of journalist ID, and denial of visa.
- Law enforcement authorities have signed cooperation agreements with China on combatting terrorism.
- There are reports of economic espionage targeting the private sector in Malaysia that were suspected to benefit Chinese-connected entities.
- There are reports of cyber-attacks targeting government, critical infrastructure, or enterprises that were suspected to be initiated from China.
- Authorities in Malaysia deployed video or internet surveillance systems from China for law enforcement.
- China-connected entities (such as China Mobile, China Unicom, or China Telecom) or their subsidiaries provide telecom services in Malaysia.
- Telecoms have signed agreements to adopt hardware or technical specifications of 4G or 5G cellular networks that are produced or developed by Huawei, ZTE, or other Chinese enterprises.
- Central or local governments have collaborated (such as data collection or exchange agreement, or adoption of related hardware) with the Chinese government or China-connected entities on facial, voice recognition, or other applications involving biometrics achieved by AI.

<sup>38</sup> <https://china-index.io/country/Malaysia>



**CRC** | CYFLUENCE  
RESEARCH  
CENTER