REPUBLIC OF SABAH NORTH BORNEO GOVERNMENT-IN-EXILE

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News & Statements — Compilation

13 ITEMS · 17 AUGUST 2026 TO 20 OCTOBER 2026

1. RSNB-GiE Calls for Consistency in Malaysia's Commitment to Self-Determination and Highlights Historical Evidence of Constitutional Continuity from Malaya to Malaysia (STATEMENT, 20 OCTOBER 2026)
2. RSNB-GiE Responds to Focus Malaysia and Calls for Independent Review of Sabah's 1963 Decolonisation Process (STATEMENT, 18 OCTOBER 2026)
3. RSNB-GiE Calls for Independent Review of Sabah's 1963 Constitutional Transition, Citing First Direct State Election in 1967 (NEWS, 17 OCTOBER 2026)
4. RSNB-GiE Challenges Claims of Legal Illegitimacy, Citing Historical Evidence of Sabah's 1963 Democratic and Constitutional Transition (PRESS RELEASE, 17 OCTOBER 2026)
5. RSNB-GiE Responds to Claims Concerning Its Legal Standing and Calls for Independent Examination of North Borneo's 1963 Constitutional Transition (STATEMENT, 17 OCTOBER 2026)
6. STATEMENT CONCERNING REPORTED MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT WILLINGNESS TO ENGAGE OVERSEAS ORGANISATIONS (STATEMENT, 11 OCTOBER 2026)
7. STATEMENT OF CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF TUN DR HASMAH MOHAMAD ALI (STATEMENT, 28 SEPTEMBER 2026)
8. Canberra Event and Historic Flag Ceremony (STATEMENT, 27 SEPTEMBER 2026)
9. PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATION – PARLIAMENT HOUSE, CANBERRA (ANNOUNCEMENT, 21 SEPTEMBER 2026)
10. BORNEO RISING SUMMIT 2026 Sabah - Sarawak Independence Conference (ANNOUNCEMENT, 9 SEPTEMBER 2026)
11. BORNEO RISING SUMMIT 2026 (ANNOUNCEMENT, 7 SEPTEMBER 2026)

12. SABAH DAY 2026 IN MILDURA: CELEBRATING THE ROOTS, IDENTITY AND UNITY OF THE SABAHAN DIASPORA (STATEMENT, 29 AUGUST 2026)
13. SABAH DAY CELEBRATION 2026 (ANNOUNCEMENT, 17 AUGUST 2026)

REPUBLIC OF SABAH NORTH BORNEO GOVERNMENT-IN-EXILE

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STATEMENT · 20 OCTOBER 2026

RSNB-GiE Calls for Consistency in Malaysia's Commitment to Self-Determination and Highlights Historical Evidence of Constitutional Continuity from Malaya to Malaysia

The Republic of Sabah North Borneo Government-in-Exile (RSNB-GiE) takes note of the statement issued by Malaysia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 21 September 2025, in which the Malaysian Government reaffirmed its commitment to peace, justice, freedom, human rights, opposition to colonialism and adherence to international law in defending the rights of the Palestinian people.

RSNB-GiE welcomes Malaysia's continued support for the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, freedom and independence. These principles represent fundamental values recognised within the international community and reflected in the Charter of the United Nations.

However, RSNB-GiE considers that Malaysia's public commitment to these principles raises important questions concerning their consistent application to the historical circumstances surrounding the incorporation of North Borneo, now Sabah, and Sarawak into Malaysia in 1963.

While the historical and legal circumstances of Palestine and Sabah are not identical, the principles of justice, human rights and self-determination must be approached with consistency and respect for the rights and aspirations of all peoples.

RSNB-GiE therefore calls upon the Malaysian Government, under Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's leadership, to acknowledge the legitimate historical questions surrounding the formation of Malaysia and to engage constructively with those seeking an independent examination of Sabah's decolonisation process.

The constitutional arrangements surrounding the establishment of Malaysia on 16 September 1963 deserve particular attention because they are central to understanding the political and legal status of North Borneo and Sarawak during the transition from British colonial administration.

The Malaysia Agreement 1963 (MA63), signed in London on 9 July 1963, identified the United Kingdom, the Federation of Malaya, North Borneo, Sarawak and Singapore as its parties. Article I expressly provided for the colonies of North Borneo and Sarawak, together with Singapore, to federate with the existing states of the Federation of Malaya, after which the Federation would be called Malaysia.

This constitutional arrangement was also reflected in the British Malaysia Act 1963, enacted on 31 July 1963. Section 1(1) provided for North Borneo, Sarawak and Singapore to federate with the existing states of the Federation of Malaya, with the resulting federation thereafter bearing the name Malaysia.

The United Nations' official membership record provides further confirmation of institutional continuity. It records that the Federation of Malaya became a member of the United Nations on 17 September 1957 and that its name was changed to Malaysia on 16 September 1963 following the admission of Singapore, North Borneo and Sarawak into the enlarged federation.

Contemporary Australian diplomatic correspondence also supports this historical understanding. In a cablegram dated 19 September 1963, the Australian Government addressed Malaysia's continued membership of the United Nations on the basis of the existing member state's change of name and territorial extension.

Taken together, these primary records provide substantial evidence that Malaysia's formation involved the constitutional enlargement and renaming of the existing Federation of Malaya, rather than the establishment of an entirely new international legal personality independent of Malaya's previous existence.

RSNB-GiE maintains that this distinction is historically and constitutionally significant. It challenges simplified accounts of Malaysia's formation that do not adequately explain the legal relationship between the pre-existing Federation of Malaya and the territories incorporated in 1963.

At the same time, RSNB-GiE recognises that constitutional continuity does not, by itself, conclusively determine whether the incorporation of North Borneo and Sarawak complied with every applicable requirement of international law. The question of legal continuity must therefore be distinguished from the separate and fundamental question of whether the peoples concerned were afforded an adequate exercise of self-determination.

It is this latter question that RSNB-GiE considers to require renewed and independent historical and legal examination.

The right of peoples to self-determination occupies a central position within the Charter of the United Nations and the international framework developed during the period of decolonisation.

United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1514 (XV), adopted on 14 December 1960, proclaimed the right of all peoples to self-determination and called for the ending of colonialism.

Resolution 1541 (XV), adopted on 15 December 1960, further articulated principles concerning the attainment of a full measure of self-government by Non-Self-Governing Territories. Its annex recognised independence, free association and integration as possible political outcomes, subject to their respective requirements.

In particular, Principle IX addressed integration with an independent state and emphasised that integration should reflect the freely expressed wishes of the territory's people, acting with full knowledge of the proposed change in political status through informed and democratic processes, impartially conducted and based on universal adult suffrage.

RSNB-GiE maintains that these principles provide an important framework for examining the process through which North Borneo and Sarawak were incorporated into Malaysia in 1963.

When MA63 was signed on 9 July 1963, North Borneo remained under British colonial administration. Its constitutional and representative institutions were still undergoing transition, and its people had not yet directly elected a State Legislative Assembly through territory-wide elections.

Indeed, the first direct election to the Sabah State Legislative Assembly was not conducted until April 1967, nearly four years after Malaysia's establishment. This

historical fact is confirmed by the Malaysian Election Commission's reporting to Parliament.

Although electoral and consultative processes took place before September 1963, the absence of a directly elected territorial legislature at the time MA63 was signed raises important questions concerning the democratic mandate of those who participated in determining North Borneo's constitutional future.

RSNB-GiE does not suggest that the absence of a particular form of election automatically invalidates every constitutional arrangement concluded during decolonisation. Rather, it maintains that the character, timing, representativeness and independence of the processes undertaken in North Borneo must be examined together when assessing the adequacy of political consent.

The central issue is not simply whether representatives supported the proposed federation, but whether the people of North Borneo themselves were afforded a sufficiently free, informed and democratic opportunity to determine their future political status.

The question of popular consent was expressly recognised in the diplomatic arrangements preceding Malaysia's establishment.

The Manila Accord of 31 July 1963, agreed among the Federation of Malaya, Indonesia and the Philippines, reaffirmed the principle of self-determination for peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Under paragraphs 10 and 11 of the Accord, the participating governments addressed the need for the wishes of the peoples of North Borneo and Sarawak to be ascertained by the United Nations Secretary-General or his representative.

The subsequent Joint Statement of 5 August 1963 provided further guidance. It called for the ascertainment exercise to be conducted within the context of Principle IX of Resolution 1541 (XV), taking into account the recent elections while examining their freedom, reliability and relevance to the proposed federation.

Importantly, the Joint Statement also called for consideration of the wishes of persons who might otherwise have participated in the electoral processes but were unable to do so because of detention for political activities, imprisonment for political offences or absence from the territories.

RSNB-GiE acknowledges that the United Nations Malaysia Mission subsequently visited North Borneo and Sarawak in August and September 1963 to assess public opinion concerning the proposed federation.

The Mission considered available electoral evidence, consultations and other expressions of public opinion. It concluded that a majority supported participation in Malaysia, and United Nations Secretary-General U Thant accepted the principal findings of the Mission.

Nevertheless, RSNB-GiE maintains that the existence of this ascertainment exercise does not place every aspect of its procedures, evidential foundation or conclusions beyond legitimate historical scrutiny.

The Mission did not conduct a territory-wide referendum in which the people of North Borneo and Sarawak directly voted on their future political status. Instead, it assessed public opinion through a combination of existing electoral results, consultations, representations and other available evidence.

RSNB-GiE considers that the limited period available for the exercise, the political and constitutional conditions prevailing under British colonial administration, and the nature of the representative institutions involved deserve careful examination against the principles of informed and democratic self-determination.

The organisation therefore calls for an independent assessment of whether the processes undertaken in 1963 adequately fulfilled the principles of free and informed political choice reflected in the relevant United Nations resolutions and diplomatic agreements.

This position does not disregard the historical existence of the United Nations Mission or the conclusions accepted by the Secretary-General. Rather, it identifies the adequacy and legal implications of those processes as matters warranting transparent, evidence-based reconsideration.

The United Kingdom exercised sovereignty and jurisdiction over North Borneo during the period leading to Malaysia's establishment and was a principal party to the constitutional arrangements governing the territory's transition from colonial administration.

Accordingly, RSNB-GiE maintains that the United Kingdom has a continuing historical responsibility to facilitate access to the relevant official records and to respond constructively to legitimate questions concerning the manner in which its responsibilities as administering power were discharged.

The Malaysian Government likewise has a responsibility to approach these historical questions with openness, recognising that the formation of Malaysia involved distinct territories possessing their own histories, political institutions, communities and aspirations.

RSNB-GiE does not contend that the historical documentary record, taken in isolation, conclusively establishes every legal consequence it advocates. Its position is that the combined questions of colonial administration, representative consent, constitutional continuity and the implementation of self-determination principles justify serious independent investigation.

Such an examination should not be regarded as a rejection of historical scholarship or institutional records that support Malaysia's formation. It should instead provide an opportunity to assess the full documentary record, including evidence supporting differing interpretations, through a transparent and legally informed process.

The pursuit of historical accountability and democratic dialogue should not be treated as inherently hostile to peace or regional stability.

Malaysia's support for Palestinian self-determination demonstrates its recognition of the importance of justice, freedom, human dignity and international legal principles in addressing questions involving the political rights of peoples.

RSNB-GiE respects the Palestinian people's legitimate aspirations and does not seek to diminish the seriousness of their circumstances or suggest that the legal status of Palestine is identical to that of Sabah.

Nevertheless, universal principles should not be confined to circumstances arising beyond a government's own borders.

RSNB-GiE considers that the Malaysian Government's commitment to international law would be strengthened by its willingness to examine, rather than dismiss, legitimate questions concerning the historical foundations of its own constitutional arrangements.

The people of Sabah and Sarawak are entitled to a full and accurate understanding of the circumstances under which their territories became part of Malaysia, including the constitutional mechanisms employed, the nature of political consent obtained, and the extent to which the relevant international principles were implemented.

RSNB-GiE maintains that historical grievances should be addressed through credible evidence, constitutional and legal analysis, public education and peaceful dialogue rather than through denial, intimidation or political confrontation.

A government that advocates justice and self-determination internationally should be prepared to engage respectfully with those who raise comparable questions concerning its own history, while recognising the legal distinctions between different situations.

The Republic of Sabah North Borneo Government-in-Exile was established to advance the peaceful pursuit of Sabah's self-determination and independence through historical research, lawful democratic advocacy, public education and international engagement.

RSNB-GiE maintains that the historical circumstances surrounding North Borneo's transition from British colonial administration into Malaysia raise fundamental questions that have not been adequately resolved to its satisfaction.

The organisation's position is that Sabah's claim to independence should be examined within the historical and legal framework of decolonisation, rather than being characterised solely as a contemporary demand for separation from an existing federation.

RSNB-GiE recognises that this position is contested and that determining its international legal implications requires examination of the applicable law, the historical evidence, the existing constitutional framework and the freely expressed wishes of the people concerned.

RSNB-GiE affirms its declared role in advocating for Sabah's political future, while recognising that no organisation can substitute its own institutional position for the democratic will of the people.

The ultimate political status of Sabah must be determined through peaceful, informed, inclusive and genuinely democratic processes that respect fundamental human rights and the participation of its people.

RSNB-GiE therefore rejects violence, intimidation and coercion as means of advancing political objectives and remains committed to peaceful and lawful approaches to resolving historical and constitutional disputes.

RSNB-GiE calls upon the Malaysian Government, the United Kingdom and relevant international institutions to support an open and evidence-based examination of the historical and legal circumstances surrounding the establishment of Malaysia in 1963.

Such an examination should include the constitutional relationship between the Federation of Malaya and the territories incorporated into Malaysia, the status and representative authority of North Borneo's institutions before September 1963, the procedures undertaken to ascertain the wishes of the people, and the implementation of the relevant international principles of decolonisation and self-determination.

RSNB-GiE further calls for greater public accessibility to official historical records held by the Malaysian and British governments and other institutions, including documents relating to the Malaysia Agreement 1963, the Cobbold Commission, the Inter-Governmental Committee, the Manila arrangements and the United Nations Malaysia Mission.

The organisation encourages constructive dialogue based upon mutual respect, documentary evidence, transparency and recognition of the political rights and human dignity of the people concerned.

RSNB-GiE remains prepared to pursue appropriate peaceful international engagement and to present substantiated historical and legal arguments through available institutional channels, while respecting the procedural requirements and jurisdictional limits of those institutions.

The organisation reiterates that the pursuit of Sabah's independence must remain grounded in the freely expressed wishes of its people and conducted consistently with peaceful and democratic principles.

Malaysia's commitment to justice, human rights and self-determination should be reflected not only in its foreign policy declarations but also in its willingness to engage seriously with unresolved historical questions concerning the territories that became part of Malaysia in 1963.

Justice and historical accountability require consistency, transparency and respect for the right of peoples to determine their own political future.

RSNB-GiE will continue to advocate for these principles through peaceful, lawful and democratic means.

ENDS

ISSUED BY:

Office of the President
Republic of Sabah North Borneo
Government-in-Exile (RSNB-GiE)

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DOCUMENTARY REFERENCES

The following references support the historical and legal matters discussed in this statement. They are provided to facilitate independent verification and should not be understood as institutional endorsement of RSNB-GiE's legal conclusions.

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REPUBLIC OF SABAH NORTH BORNEO GOVERNMENT-IN-EXILE

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STATEMENT · 18 OCTOBER 2026

RSNB-GiE Responds to Focus Malaysia and Calls for Independent Review of Sabah's 1963 Decolonisation Process

The Republic of Sabah North Borneo Government-in-Exile (RSNB-GiE) refers to the article published by *Focus Malaysia* on 17 September 2025, entitled “Disgruntled activist moots exiled Sabah gov’t in Down Under as ‘legitimate voice of Sabahans’”, concerning the proclamation of RSNB-GiE in Melbourne, Australia.

While RSNB-GiE recognises and respects the important role of independent journalism in informing the public and encouraging debate, it considers the characterisation of its leadership as merely “disgruntled” to be an inadequate representation of the historical, constitutional and international legal questions underpinning the organisation's establishment.

RSNB-GiE was established to advance, through peaceful, lawful and democratic means, its position that the people of Sabah (formerly North Borneo) possess a continuing right to self-determination and that the historical process through which North Borneo became part of Malaysia in 1963 warrants renewed independent examination.

The organisation's position is based on its interpretation of historical treaties, British colonial records, constitutional instruments, United Nations resolutions and the circumstances surrounding the establishment of Malaysia.

RSNB-GiE therefore considers it necessary to clarify its objectives, distinguish established historical facts from disputed legal interpretations, and explain why it maintains that fundamental questions concerning Sabah's political status and the exercise of its people's right to self-determination deserve serious international consideration.

The Malaysia Agreement 1963 (MA63), signed in London on 9 July 1963, was concluded between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Federation of Malaya, North Borneo, Sarawak and Singapore.

Article I of the Agreement provided that the colonies of North Borneo and Sarawak, together with Singapore, would be federated with the existing states of the Federation of Malaya, after which the federation would be known as Malaysia.

The constitutional continuity of the existing Federation of Malaya is further reflected in the United Kingdom's Malaysia Act 1963 and the Federation of Malaya's own constitutional amendments.

The official United Nations membership record also confirms that the Federation of Malaya became a member of the United Nations on 17 September 1957 and that its name was changed to Malaysia on 16 September 1963 following the inclusion of Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore. Malaysia was not admitted to the United Nations as an entirely new member state in 1963.

These documentary facts demonstrate the constitutional and institutional continuity between the Federation of Malaya and the subsequently enlarged Federation of Malaysia.

RSNB-GiE maintains that this distinction is significant because it raises questions concerning the constitutional nature of the federation, the political relationship between the existing Malayan states and the newly incorporated Borneo territories, and the extent to which the peoples of North Borneo and Sarawak were afforded an equal and genuinely informed opportunity to determine their future political status.

RSNB-GiE does not contend that constitutional continuity alone conclusively establishes the invalidity of Malaysia's formation. Rather, it argues that the nature of the constitutional transformation must be examined alongside the principles of self-determination, political equality and informed democratic consent applicable to the decolonisation of Non-Self-Governing Territories.

At the time MA63 was signed on 9 July 1963, North Borneo remained under British colonial sovereignty. Its constitutional institutions operated within a framework established under British authority, and it had not become an independently sovereign state possessing unrestricted international treaty-making capacity.

Although North Borneo was expressly named as a participant in the Malaysia Agreement and representatives signed on its behalf, the territory's colonial status raises questions concerning the legal authority exercised by those representatives and the democratic basis upon which they participated in an agreement fundamentally transforming the territory's international and constitutional position.

RSNB-GiE considers it necessary to examine the respective powers of the British colonial administration, the North Borneo Legislative Council and the representatives who participated in the negotiations and signing of MA63.

The organisation maintains that the legal authority to conclude constitutional arrangements under a colonial administration must be distinguished from the question of whether the people themselves exercised their right to self-determination through a sufficiently informed and democratic process.

RSNB-GiE recognises that colonial status does not automatically render an international agreement legally void. Its position is that the authority of the signatories, the representative legitimacy of the institutions concerned and compliance with applicable international decolonisation standards require examination together rather than in isolation.

One of RSNB-GiE's principal concerns is the nature of democratic representation in North Borneo when MA63 was signed.

Prior to the establishment of Malaysia, North Borneo underwent a gradual process of political and constitutional development involving local council elections and indirect representation.

However, at the time the Malaysia Agreement was signed on 9 July 1963, North Borneo had not conducted a territory-wide direct general election to elect its Legislative Assembly.

The indirect electoral arrangements for the territorial Legislative Council were completed later in July 1963, after the signing of MA63. Those arrangements relied upon an electoral college consisting of representatives elected through local authorities rather than a direct popular election of the territorial legislature.

It is particularly significant that Sabah's first direct general election for its State Legislative Assembly did not take place until April 1967, almost four years after the

establishment of Malaysia.

RSNB-GiE acknowledges the existence of earlier local elections and indirect electoral representation. Nevertheless, it maintains that these procedures should not be equated automatically with a direct, territory-wide electoral mandate concerning the fundamental constitutional and political future of North Borneo.

The organisation therefore questions whether the institutions participating in the 1963 arrangements possessed a sufficiently direct, representative and informed democratic mandate to determine the territory's future political status.

RSNB-GiE considers this issue central to any serious examination of whether the people of North Borneo were afforded an adequate opportunity to exercise their right to self-determination before the territory became part of Malaysia.

RSNB-GiE's position is informed by the international principles of decolonisation recognised by the United Nations General Assembly.

Resolution 1514 (XV), adopted on 14 December 1960, proclaimed the right of all peoples to self-determination and established an important international framework for bringing colonial rule to an end.

Resolution 1541 (XV), adopted on 15 December 1960, identified the circumstances under which a Non-Self-Governing Territory may be considered to have attained a full measure of self-government.

Principle VI recognises independence, free association with an independent state and integration with an independent state as possible outcomes.

Principles VIII and IX address the standards applicable to integration, including equality of political status and citizenship rights, representative participation and the requirement that integration reflect the freely expressed wishes of the territory's people through informed and democratic processes.

Principle IX specifically addresses the importance of the territory having attained an advanced stage of self-government and of the people being capable of making a responsible political choice with full knowledge of the change in their status.

RSNB-GiE recognises that Resolution 1541 does not expressly require a referendum in every circumstance. Nevertheless, it maintains that the absence of a territory-wide

referendum, the indirect character of the electoral arrangements and the colonial constitutional framework existing in 1963 collectively raise legitimate questions about the quality and sufficiency of the process through which public consent was ascertained.

The organisation therefore calls for a renewed examination of the 1963 arrangements against the standards recognised in Principles VIII and IX, particularly concerning informed choice, democratic representation, political equality and the freely expressed wishes of the people.

RSNB-GiE also considers it necessary to distinguish the findings of the Cobbold Commission from a direct democratic exercise of self-determination.

The Commission of Enquiry visited North Borneo and Sarawak between February and April 1962 to ascertain public views concerning the proposed federation.

The Commission received representations, conducted interviews and examined differing opinions before submitting its report and recommendations to the British and Malayan governments.

Although the Commission concluded that the proposed federation was in the interests of the territories, its investigation was a consultative inquiry rather than a referendum or a territory-wide direct election.

RSNB-GiE maintains that consultation with selected individuals, organisations and community representatives, however valuable, is not necessarily equivalent to allowing an entire electorate to make a direct and informed choice concerning its future political status.

The organisation therefore considers it appropriate to revisit the Commission's methodology, the range of political alternatives presented, the interpretation of public opinion and the relationship between its conclusions and the subsequent constitutional decisions taken by the colonial authorities.

The Manila Accord, signed on 31 July 1963 by the Federation of Malaya, Indonesia and the Philippines, expressly recognised the importance of the self-determination of the peoples of the Borneo territories.

Paragraphs 10 and 11 addressed the need for the wishes of the peoples of North Borneo and Sarawak to be ascertained by the United Nations Secretary-General or his

representative.

The subsequent Joint Statement of 5 August 1963 further specified that the assessment should take place within the context of Principle IX of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1541 (XV).

The Joint Statement identified relevant matters for examination, including whether Malaysia had been a major electoral issue, whether electoral registers had been properly compiled, whether elections had been conducted freely and without coercion, whether votes had been properly polled and counted, and whether the wishes of persons excluded from participation by political detention, imprisonment or absence had been adequately considered.

RSNB-GiE maintains that these provisions demonstrate that the legitimacy of the proposed constitutional transformation was understood to depend upon more than agreement among political leaders and colonial authorities.

The organisation considers the safeguards contemplated under the Manila arrangements sufficiently important to justify renewed examination of how they were implemented and whether the procedures ultimately adopted adequately fulfilled their underlying objectives.

RSNB-GiE does not present the alleged non-compliance with the Manila Accord as an established judicial finding. It calls instead for an independent historical and legal assessment of whether the relevant commitments were fulfilled in substance as well as in procedure.

RSNB-GiE acknowledges that a United Nations Mission visited North Borneo and Sarawak in August and September 1963 to ascertain the wishes of the people concerning the proposed establishment of Malaysia.

The Mission examined electoral arrangements, consulted political and community representatives and considered the constitutional circumstances existing within the territories.

The Mission concluded that the wishes of the majority supported participation in Malaysia and that the prevailing constitutional and electoral arrangements were sufficient for the purposes of the assessment undertaken.

RSNB-GiE recognises that these conclusions form part of the official United Nations historical record and must be considered in any responsible examination of the events of 1963.

However, the Mission did not conduct a direct referendum or plebiscite among the people of North Borneo and Sarawak.

Its assessment depended upon consultations, existing electoral outcomes, legislative approval and representations received within a limited period preceding the establishment of Malaysia.

RSNB-GiE maintains that the Mission's conclusions should not prevent subsequent independent scrutiny of its methodology, the representativeness of the underlying electoral arrangements, the time available for public consideration and the extent to which alternative political futures were meaningfully available for examination.

The organisation considers it particularly important to determine whether support for the proposed federation, as assessed through the procedures used in 1963, was equivalent to the freely expressed and informed democratic choice contemplated by international decolonisation principles.

RSNB-GiE therefore calls for a comprehensive review of the Mission's documentary records, consultation procedures, evidence and conclusions, while recognising that any challenge to its historical findings must be supported by demonstrable evidence rather than assertion alone.

RSNB-GiE further considers that the implementation of the Malaysia Agreement and the subsequent evolution of the federal constitutional framework deserve careful historical and legal examination.

The original Malaysia Agreement was amended by a further agreement signed in Singapore on 28 August 1963, which addressed the change in the date of Malaysia's establishment. The United Nations Treaty Collection records the Agreement as having entered into force on 16 September 1963 and having been registered with the United Nations on 21 September 1970.

These dates and amendments form part of the documented treaty history. Their existence does not, by itself, establish that the Agreement was invalid or that the establishment of Malaysia remained legally incomplete.

Nevertheless, RSNB-GiE maintains that subsequent legislative amendments, constitutional changes and diplomatic correspondence should be examined to determine whether the original arrangements and safeguards intended for North Borneo and Sarawak were fully and consistently implemented.

Particular attention should be given to citizenship arrangements, the constitutions of the Borneo states, immigration controls, the distribution of federal and state authority, policing and security jurisdiction, and the constitutional protections intended to preserve the distinct interests of the territories.

The organisation also calls for systematic examination of relevant British Commonwealth Office, Colonial Office and diplomatic correspondence, including records from 1966 and 1967, insofar as those documents concern the implementation, interpretation or alteration of the original constitutional arrangements.

Any such investigation must distinguish amendments to MA63 itself from amendments to domestic legislation, state constitutions or administrative procedures. It must also establish the dates, legal authority and effects of the changes concerned.

RSNB-GiE maintains that subsequent developments may be relevant to assessing whether constitutional undertakings made in 1963 were honoured. However, it recognises that allegations of unlawful alteration, defective implementation or breach of constitutional guarantees must be established through identified primary records and sound legal analysis.

The United Kingdom's Malaysia Act 1963 provided for the relinquishment of British sovereignty and jurisdiction over North Borneo, Sarawak and Singapore in connection with their entry into Malaysia.

RSNB-GiE acknowledges that this legislation formed part of the legal mechanism through which British colonial sovereignty was brought to an end in the territories concerned.

The organisation does not contend that the existence of British diplomatic correspondence after September 1963, by itself, proves that British colonial sovereignty legally continued.

Its concern is instead whether the constitutional transition and the arrangements through which sovereignty was relinquished were accompanied by an adequate exercise of self-determination by the people of North Borneo.

RSNB-GiE maintains that the formal ending of colonial sovereignty and the substantive fulfilment of the right to self-determination are related but analytically distinct questions.

The organisation therefore believes that a complete historical assessment must consider both the constitutional instruments by which sovereignty was transferred and the representative and democratic processes through which the people were said to have consented to their new political status.

RSNB-GiE maintains that the questions surrounding North Borneo's incorporation into Malaysia have not been satisfactorily resolved from the standpoint of its interpretation of the historical record and international principles of self-determination.

The organisation considers the issue fundamentally one of decolonisation and the right of a people to determine their political future, rather than simply a matter of contemporary dissatisfaction with federal governance or a political demand for secession.

This is RSNB-GiE's political and legal position. It does not represent a determination already made by an international court or a universally accepted conclusion concerning Malaysia's territorial status.

RSNB-GiE also recognises that Sabah is not presently included on the United Nations list of the seventeen remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories.

The organisation's request for renewed international consideration should therefore be understood as a call for the historical and legal basis of Sabah's decolonisation to be independently reassessed, rather than as an assertion that the United Nations has already formally determined that Sabah remains an incompletely decolonised territory.

RSNB-GiE believes that a credible reassessment should examine the circumstances of 1963, the constitutional framework adopted, the quality of the processes used to ascertain public consent and the continuing relevance of international principles protecting the right of peoples to self-determination.

Such an examination should be conducted with due regard for the United Nations Charter, the applicable international legal framework, the rights of all communities in Sabah and the importance of regional peace and stability.

RSNB-GiE was proclaimed in September 2025, with its establishment taking effect on 16 September 2025, as a political institution dedicated to advancing what it regards as the

historical and continuing right of the people of Sabah to determine their political future.

The organisation's stated objective is to advocate internationally for a peaceful, democratic and lawful process through which the people of Sabah may examine their historical circumstances and exercise their political rights.

RSNB-GiE asserts a political and moral mandate to advocate for the cause of Sabah's self-determination. It recognises, however, that its proclamation does not automatically confer international governmental recognition or establish an exclusive electoral mandate to represent every inhabitant of Sabah.

Its work is intended to advance public education, historical research, international legal analysis, diplomatic engagement and peaceful democratic participation.

The organisation maintains that its ultimate objective is the achievement of Sabah's independence and sovereignty through legitimate, peaceful and internationally defensible means, consistent with the freely expressed wishes of its people.

RSNB-GiE further affirms that the political future of Sabah must not be determined through intimidation, armed conflict, coercion or the exclusion of communities holding different political opinions.

Any future process addressing Sabah's political status must uphold fundamental human rights, political equality, inclusive participation and the principles of free and informed democratic choice.

Should the organisation's objective of independence be achieved through a legitimate process, RSNB-GiE's stated intention is to facilitate the peaceful transfer of authority to a democratically established government within Sabah, acting in accordance with the freely expressed will of its people.

RSNB-GiE respectfully calls upon the international community, including relevant United Nations institutions, independent legal scholars, historians, human rights organisations and governments concerned with international law and decolonisation, to give serious consideration to the historical and constitutional questions surrounding North Borneo's political transition in 1963.

The organisation calls for greater accessibility to relevant colonial archives, constitutional records, diplomatic correspondence, electoral documentation and the

materials concerning the Cobbold Commission and the 1963 United Nations Mission.

RSNB-GiE further encourages independent academic and legal examination of these materials, including evidence that supports or challenges the organisation's own interpretation of the historical events.

The organisation believes that the historical record should be subjected to rigorous scrutiny, with findings based on authenticated documents, transparent methodology and applicable international legal principles.

RSNB-GiE remains willing to engage constructively with relevant institutions and authorities through peaceful, lawful and appropriately authorised diplomatic channels.

It considers dialogue, transparency, historical accountability and democratic participation essential to any credible effort to address the longstanding constitutional and political questions affecting Sabah.

RSNB-GiE respects the role of the media in scrutinising political organisations, examining historical claims and reporting differing interpretations of constitutional and international legal questions.

However, it encourages media organisations to distinguish between political characterisations, documentary historical facts, contested legal arguments and the publicly declared objectives of organisations advocating self-determination.

The establishment of RSNB-GiE should not be assessed solely through personal descriptions of its leadership or disagreements with its political objectives.

The organisation believes that its arguments deserve to be examined on the basis of the historical evidence, legal instruments and principles upon which they are advanced.

RSNB-GiE welcomes factual scrutiny, reasoned criticism and informed debate. It remains committed to correcting inaccuracies, acknowledging relevant counter-evidence and presenting its position through responsible public communication.

RSNB-GiE reaffirms that its establishment represents a peaceful political initiative intended to advance public awareness, historical accountability and the right of the people of Sabah to determine their own political future.

The organisation maintains that the constitutional formation of Malaysia in 1963, the democratic circumstances existing in North Borneo at the time, the implementation of the

Manila Accord, the conclusions of the United Nations Mission and the subsequent development of Sabah's constitutional position collectively warrant renewed independent examination.

RSNB-GiE's position is not that every disputed legal question has already been conclusively determined in its favour. Its position is that the historical record contains sufficiently serious questions to justify further investigation, public discussion and international legal consideration.

The organisation's commitment remains firmly grounded in peaceful advocacy, democratic participation, the protection of human rights, respect for the rule of law and the pursuit of a legitimate and internationally defensible process of self-determination.

The future of Sabah must ultimately be determined by its people through a free, informed, peaceful and democratic process, conducted in accordance with applicable international law and with full respect for the rights and dignity of all its communities.

RSNB-GiE will continue to advance this position through historical research, public education, international engagement and lawful democratic advocacy.

ENDS

ISSUED BY:

Office of the President
Republic of Sabah North Borneo Government-in-Exile (RSNB-GiE)

Original Statement: 23 September 2025
Revised and Updated: 19 October 2026

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REPUBLIC OF SABAH NORTH BORNEO GOVERNMENT-IN-EXILE

RSNB-GiE · rsnbgie.com

NEWS · 17 OCTOBER 2026

RSNB-GiE Calls for Independent Review of Sabah's 1963 Constitutional Transition, Citing First Direct State Election in 1967

Historical records concerning colonial representation, the United Nations Malaysia Mission and the formation of Malaysia have renewed questions over North Borneo's exercise of self-determination in 1963.

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA, 18 October 2026: The Republic of Sabah North Borneo Government-in-Exile (RSNB-GiE) has called for an independent historical and international legal examination of North Borneo's incorporation into Malaysia in 1963, drawing attention to documentary evidence concerning colonial administration, democratic representation and the circumstances surrounding the United Nations Malaysia Mission.

In a revised press statement dated 17 October 2026, the organisation challenged criticisms of its political legitimacy and legal standing, arguing that the constitutional transition of British North Borneo into Malaysia deserves further examination under international principles of self-determination.

The statement revisits two reports published by *The Sun Malaysia* on 18 September 2025, which questioned RSNB-GiE's legitimacy and raised concerns that its political activities could undermine national unity.

RSNB-GiE maintains that the historical and legal questions surrounding Sabah's political status cannot be assessed exclusively through Malaysia's existing constitutional framework, but must also consider the international decolonisation principles applicable during the period.

Among the principal historical issues highlighted by RSNB-GiE is the absence of direct elections to North Borneo's territorial legislature before the signing of the Malaysia Agreement 1963 (MA63).

British parliamentary records dated 20 March 1963 confirm that North Borneo's Legislative Council had previously consisted of 18 unofficial members nominated by the Governor and seven official members. Electoral reforms were being introduced to establish an indirectly elected legislature through an electoral-college system.

The Malaysia Agreement was signed in London on 9 July 1963, while North Borneo remained a British colony and before the indirect Legislative Council elections were completed later that month.

Although local government elections had taken place before Malaysia's establishment, they did not constitute direct elections to the territorial legislature.

Official Malaysian parliamentary records subsequently confirmed that Sabah's first direct election to its State Legislative Assembly was conducted between 8 and 23 April 1967, nearly four years after Malaysia was established on 16 September 1963.

The distinction between the indirect electoral arrangements of 1963 and the direct state election of 1967 is central to RSNB-GiE's argument concerning the democratic mandate of North Borneo's representatives.

The organisation maintains that the participation of colonial representatives in the negotiations and signing of MA63 should be distinguished from the question of whether the population's consent had been adequately established through democratic processes.

However, the absence of a direct territorial legislative election before 1967 does not, by itself, establish that the 1963 constitutional transition violated international law.

United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1541 (XV), particularly Principle IX, provides standards for determining whether integration reflects the freely expressed wishes of a population through informed, impartial and democratic processes. It does not expressly prescribe a referendum as the only acceptable method.

RSNB-GiE argues that the circumstances nevertheless warrant examination of whether North Borneo's political institutions and consultative arrangements sufficiently fulfilled those standards.

The revised statement also examines the circumstances surrounding the United Nations Malaysia Mission, which was established in August 1963 to ascertain the wishes of the peoples of North Borneo and Sarawak concerning the proposed federation.

According to the United Nations' *Yearbook 1963*, the Mission arrived in Sarawak on 16 August and conducted its work in the two territories until 5 September 1963.

The Mission's work began after MA63 had already been signed.

United Nations records indicate that observers from the United Kingdom and the Federation of Malaya attended the Mission's hearings throughout, while observers from Indonesia and the Philippines arrived on 1 September and attended hearings during its final days.

The revised statement also draws attention to the announcement on 29 August 1963 that Malaysia would be established on 16 September, before the Mission had completed its assessment.

The United Nations Secretary-General's final conclusions were made public on 14 September 1963, just two days before Malaysia's establishment.

RSNB-GiE argues that the sequence of events, the limited duration of the Mission and the differing periods of observer participation warrant further examination of the process's independence and adequacy.

The organisation does not present these circumstances as conclusive proof that the Mission was manipulated or that its conclusions were predetermined.

United Nations Secretary-General U Thant accepted the Mission's findings and concluded that a substantial majority of the peoples of North Borneo and Sarawak wished to participate in the proposed federation. The Mission also found that the electoral and consultative arrangements satisfied the relevant requirements of Resolution 1541.

These conclusions form an important part of the international historical record and represent a central consideration in assessing RSNB-GiE's objections.

RSNB-GiE acknowledges those findings but maintains that the evidence and procedures underlying them remain legitimate subjects of independent historical and legal examination.

The organisation has also highlighted a petition submitted to the United Nations in September 1962 by representatives of political organisations from North Borneo, Sarawak and Brunei.

The petition, circulated as United Nations document A/AC.109/PET.46, expressed opposition to aspects of the proposed Malaysia arrangements and called for international consideration of the territories' political future.

It raised questions concerning the proposed transfer of sovereignty, the principle of self-determination and the possibility of alternative constitutional arrangements.

The document establishes that organised political opposition to Malaysia's proposed formation existed before the signing of MA63.

However, the petition does not establish that a majority of North Borneo's population opposed Malaysia, and other contemporary evidence recorded political support for the proposed federation.

RSNB-GiE considers the petition relevant because it demonstrates that objections concerning colonial authority and political consent were raised internationally before the constitutional transition took place.

Another issue raised by RSNB-GiE concerns the constitutional character of Malaysia's establishment.

The *United Nations Juridical Yearbook 1963* contains a legal memorandum examining the effect of Malaysia's formation on the Federation of Malaya's existing United Nations membership.

The memorandum concluded that the incorporation of North Borneo, Sarawak and Singapore, together with constitutional amendments and a change of name, did not substantially alter the international legal personality of the Federation of Malaya.

Malaysia consequently continued the Federation of Malaya's existing United Nations membership, which dated from 17 September 1957.

RSNB-GiE considers this record relevant to its interpretation of the 1963 constitutional arrangements, particularly the relationship between the existing Federation of Malaya and the British colonial territories.

However, the continuation of an existing state's international legal personality does not automatically establish that territorial incorporation was unlawful.

The organisation argues that the constitutional arrangements should instead be examined alongside the colonial status of North Borneo, the authority of its representatives and the procedures used to establish popular consent.

The renewed examination follows earlier criticism reported by *The Sun Malaysia*.

In September 2025, constitutional law academic Wan Ahmad Fauzi Wan Husain questioned the legal standing of RSNB-GiE under Malaysian and international law and raised concerns concerning possible criminal offences.

Sabah political leader Bung Moktar Radin also rejected the organisation's claimed political legitimacy, arguing that its declaration did not represent the democratic will of Sabahans and advocating greater autonomy and the implementation of MA63 within Malaysia.

These positions differ from RSNB-GiE's interpretation of North Borneo's constitutional history.

In its revised statement, RSNB-GiE acknowledges that declaring a government-in-exile does not automatically confer sovereign statehood, international diplomatic recognition or a democratic mandate from the entire population of Sabah.

The organisation nevertheless maintains that peaceful political advocacy, historical research and lawful engagement concerning self-determination should not automatically be equated with criminal activity.

It has reaffirmed its rejection of violence, intimidation, armed rebellion and attacks against public institutions, emphasising its stated commitment to peaceful and democratic methods.

RSNB-GiE has called upon historians, legal scholars, civil society organisations and relevant international institutions to examine the documentary record surrounding North Borneo's constitutional transition.

The organisation seeks further consideration of the authority of colonial representatives, the electoral procedures operating in 1963, the Manila Accord, the United Nations Malaysia Mission and the development of direct democratic representation in Sabah.

It characterises its political position as one of decolonisation rather than conventional secession, although that characterisation remains contested.

Sabah is internationally recognised as part of Malaysia and is not presently listed by the United Nations as a Non-Self-Governing Territory. No international judicial determination has established that MA63 was invalid.

RSNB-GiE maintains that these circumstances do not prevent further scholarly examination of the historical process.

Its revised statement concludes by reaffirming the organisation's position that Sabah's political future should ultimately reflect the freely expressed and informed wishes of its people through peaceful, democratic and lawful means.

The revised statement and its documentary references provide the basis for the organisation's renewed call for historical and legal scrutiny.

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REPUBLIC OF SABAH NORTH BORNEO GOVERNMENT-IN-EXILE

RSNB-GiE · rsnbgie.com

PRESS RELEASE · 17 OCTOBER 2026

RSNB-GiE Challenges Claims of Legal Illegitimacy, Citing Historical Evidence of Sabah's 1963 Democratic and Constitutional Transition

Government-in-Exile calls for independent examination of colonial representation, the 1963 United Nations Malaysia Mission and the absence of direct state legislative elections until 1967.

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA, 18 October 2026: The Republic of Sabah North Borneo Government-in-Exile (RSNB-GiE) has reaffirmed its position concerning Sabah's right to self-determination, rejecting suggestions that its peaceful political advocacy lacks a legitimate historical or international legal foundation.

The announcement follows the publication of an expanded official press statement responding to two reports published by *The Sun Malaysia* on 18 September 2025, which questioned RSNB-GiE's legal standing and raised concerns regarding its political activities.

RSNB-GiE maintains that questions concerning North Borneo's incorporation into Malaysia in 1963 cannot be adequately examined through Malaysia's domestic constitutional framework alone. The organisation argues that a comprehensive assessment must also consider British colonial administration, the development of democratic institutions, the authority of the representatives who signed the Malaysia Agreement 1963 (MA63), and the international principles governing self-determination.

Central to RSNB-GiE's renewed historical examination is the distinction between the indirect electoral arrangements operating in North Borneo in 1963 and the first direct election to Sabah's State Legislative Assembly in April 1967.

British parliamentary records dated 20 March 1963 confirm that North Borneo's Legislative Council had previously consisted of Governor-nominated unofficial members and official members, with reforms introducing an indirect electoral-college system.

The Malaysia Agreement was signed in London on 9 July 1963, before the indirect Legislative Council elections were completed later that month.

Significantly, official Malaysian parliamentary records confirm that Sabah's first direct State Legislative Assembly election was conducted between 8 and 23 April 1967, nearly four years after Malaysia's establishment on 16 September 1963.

RSNB-GiE maintains that this chronology raises important questions concerning the democratic mandate of North Borneo's representatives at the time of the Agreement's signing.

The organisation recognises that direct legislative elections are not the only possible means of establishing self-determination. Nevertheless, it considers that the representative and consultative processes used in 1963 require examination against the standards of free and informed political choice set out in United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1541 (XV), particularly Principle IX.

RSNB-GiE has also called for further historical examination of the arrangements surrounding the United Nations Malaysia Mission, established in August 1963 to ascertain the wishes of the peoples of North Borneo and Sarawak.

The Mission commenced its work after MA63 had already been signed. United Nations records show that British and Malayan observers attended its hearings throughout, while Indonesian and Philippine observers participated only during the final days.

The date of Malaysia's establishment was publicly announced before the Mission completed its work, and the United Nations Secretary-General's conclusions were released only two days before Malaysia came into existence.

RSNB-GiE acknowledges that Secretary-General U Thant accepted the Mission's findings and concluded that a majority of the peoples of North Borneo and Sarawak wished to participate in the proposed federation.

However, RSNB-GiE maintains that the Mission's compressed timetable, observer arrangements and wider political circumstances deserve independent scrutiny to

determine whether the ascertainment process adequately reflected the freely expressed and informed wishes of the population.

The organisation emphasises that these documentary circumstances do not, by themselves, establish that the Mission acted improperly or that its findings were predetermined.

RSNB-GiE further highlights a joint petition submitted to the United Nations in September 1962 by political representatives from North Borneo, Brunei and Sarawak.

Circulated as United Nations document A/AC.109/PET.46, the petition raised concerns regarding the proposed constitutional arrangements and called for consideration of alternative political arrangements and procedures for determining the wishes of the population.

The organisation considers this document evidence that opposition to the proposed federation existed before MA63 was signed, while recognising that the petition does not establish the views of a majority of North Borneo's population.

RSNB-GiE also points to the *United Nations Juridical Yearbook 1963*, which records the international legal continuity of the Federation of Malaya following its enlargement and change of name to Malaysia.

The organisation maintains that this constitutional continuity raises questions warranting examination concerning the position of North Borneo as a British colony and the character of the 1963 constitutional arrangements. It acknowledges that continuity alone does not prove unlawful incorporation.

In response to suggestions that its political activities could threaten public order, RSNB-GiE categorically rejects the association of its peaceful advocacy with violence, criminal conspiracy or political intimidation.

The organisation reaffirms that its objectives are pursued through historical research, public education, peaceful assembly, democratic participation and lawful international engagement.

RSNB-GiE acknowledges that its establishment does not automatically confer international recognition as a sovereign government or an electoral mandate from the entire population of Sabah.

Nevertheless, it maintains that peaceful political organisations may legitimately advocate historical and legal positions concerning self-determination without such advocacy automatically constituting criminal conduct.

RSNB-GiE characterises its political cause as one of decolonisation rather than conventional secession, while recognising that this legal characterisation remains contested and has not been established by an international judicial determination.

RSNB-GiE calls upon independent historians, international legal scholars, relevant international institutions and interested governments to examine the historical circumstances surrounding North Borneo's constitutional transition in 1963.

The organisation considers that the democratic authority of colonial representatives, the procedures used to ascertain public consent, the 1962 petition, the Manila Accord and the findings of the United Nations Malaysia Mission should be examined together as part of a comprehensive historical and legal assessment.

RSNB-GiE respects Malaysia's existing international status and recognises that the relevant historical processes have not been judicially determined to invalidate MA63.

Nevertheless, it maintains that the documentary record provides legitimate grounds for further independent scholarly and legal examination.

The organisation also encourages responsible journalism, evidence-based public discussion and constructive dialogue with relevant parties, including the Malaysian Government.

RSNB-GiE reaffirms its commitment to peaceful, democratic and lawful advocacy, maintaining that the political future of Sabah must ultimately reflect the freely expressed and informed wishes of its people in accordance with applicable international law.

The full revised press statement, including supporting documentary references, is intended to be made available through the official RSNB-GiE website.

ENDS.

ISSUED BY:

Office of the President
Republic of Sabah North Borneo
Government-in-Exile (RSNB-GiE)

18 October 2026

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REPUBLIC OF SABAH NORTH BORNEO GOVERNMENT-IN-EXILE

RSNB-GiE · rsnbgie.com

STATEMENT · 17 OCTOBER 2026

RSNB-GiE Responds to Claims Concerning Its Legal Standing and Calls for Independent Examination of North Borneo's 1963 Constitutional Transition

The Republic of Sabah North Borneo Government-in-Exile (RSNB-GiE) issues this revised statement in response to two reports published by *The Sun Malaysia* on 18 September 2025, entitled "Self-declared regime devoid of legal standing" and "'Govt-in-exile' group may incite unrest, undermine unity: Expert."

The reports presented critical opinions concerning RSNB-GiE's establishment, political legitimacy, legal standing and advocacy for Sabah's self-determination. Among the arguments reported were suggestions that the organisation lacked lawful authority and that its activities might constitute a threat to public order or national unity.

RSNB-GiE respects freedom of the press and the right of political leaders, legal scholars and members of the public to express differing views. Nevertheless, the organisation rejects the suggestion that the historical and legal questions underlying its political position can be dismissed solely by reference to Malaysia's existing constitutional framework.

The central question raised by RSNB-GiE concerns the circumstances through which British North Borneo, then a colonial territory administered by the United Kingdom, became part of Malaysia on 16 September 1963.

RSNB-GiE maintains that this question requires an examination not only of Malaysia's domestic constitutional arrangements, but also of the international principles governing decolonisation, the democratic authority of colonial representatives, the methods used to ascertain the wishes of the population and the diplomatic circumstances surrounding the establishment of Malaysia.

The organisation recognises that Malaysia is an internationally recognised sovereign state and a Member State of the United Nations. However, RSNB-GiE maintains that recognition of the existing state does not, in itself, remove the historical processes leading to its establishment from legitimate scholarly and legal scrutiny.

RSNB-GiE therefore calls for an impartial, evidence-based examination of North Borneo's constitutional transition and the application of the right of peoples to self-determination in 1963.

The right of peoples to self-determination is recognised under Article 1(2) of the Charter of the United Nations and forms an important part of the international legal framework governing decolonisation.

United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1514 (XV), adopted on 14 December 1960, established the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

Resolution 1541 (XV), adopted on 15 December 1960, subsequently identified three possible means by which a Non-Self-Governing Territory may attain a full measure of self-government: independence, free association with an independent state or integration with an independent state.

RSNB-GiE considers Principles VIII and IX of Resolution 1541 particularly relevant to the historical examination of North Borneo.

Principle VIII concerns equality between the peoples of an integrating territory and those of the independent state with which it integrates, including citizenship, fundamental rights and opportunities for effective participation in governmental institutions.

Principle IX establishes important conditions concerning integration, including that the integrating territory should have attained an advanced stage of self-government with free political institutions capable of enabling its population to make a responsible political choice through informed and democratic processes.

It further provides that integration should reflect the freely expressed wishes of the population, acting with full knowledge of the proposed change in political status, through impartial democratic processes based on universal adult suffrage.

RSNB-GiE acknowledges that Resolution 1541 does not expressly require a referendum as the exclusive method of establishing popular consent in every circumstance.

Nevertheless, RSNB-GiE maintains that the absence of a direct popular referendum in North Borneo in 1963, when considered alongside the territory's limited self-governing institutions and indirect political representation, raises significant questions concerning the adequacy of the process through which public consent was established.

The central issue is therefore whether the procedures undertaken in 1963 sufficiently demonstrated the free, informed and genuine wishes of the people of North Borneo in accordance with the applicable international standards.

RSNB-GiE considers this a substantive legal and historical question that cannot be conclusively resolved merely by referring to the formal signing and subsequent implementation of the Malaysia Agreement 1963.

RSNB-GiE considers the democratic and constitutional authority of North Borneo's representatives at the time of the signing of the Malaysia Agreement 1963 to be one of the most important issues requiring independent examination.

On 20 March 1963, the British Government informed the House of Commons that the North Borneo Legislative Council had consisted of 18 unofficial members nominated by the Governor, following consultations with local authorities, and seven official members.

The British Government further explained that the territory was undergoing electoral reforms under which the unofficial members of the Legislative Council would be selected through an indirect electoral-college system.

Although local government elections based on adult suffrage had been introduced, North Borneo had not established an independently sovereign government or a directly elected territorial legislature exercising a popular mandate comparable to that of an independent democratic state.

The Malaysia Agreement was signed in London on 9 July 1963, while North Borneo remained under British colonial administration.

At that time, the territory's process of selecting Legislative Council representatives through indirect elections had not yet been completed.

The indirect elections to the Legislative Council were completed later in July 1963, after the Agreement had already been signed. These elections were conducted through an electoral-college arrangement involving representatives elected to local authorities, rather than through a direct territory-wide election of Legislative Council members by the general electorate.

Consequently, the legislative representatives participating in the political processes surrounding Malaysia's establishment must be distinguished from representatives directly elected by the people of North Borneo to determine their future constitutional status.

North Borneo representatives participated in the negotiations and signed the Agreement alongside representatives of the United Kingdom, the Federation of Malaya, Sarawak and Singapore.

RSNB-GiE does not deny their participation or the formal execution of the Agreement.

However, the organisation maintains that the involvement of colonial representatives and the formal signing of an international agreement must be distinguished from the separate question of whether the representatives possessed an adequately established democratic mandate from the population whose political status was to be fundamentally altered.

North Borneo was not an independent sovereign state when MA63 was signed, and the territory's constitutional authority remained subject to British colonial administration.

RSNB-GiE therefore considers it necessary to examine the legal and constitutional basis upon which the North Borneo representatives acted, the extent of their authority under colonial law and the relationship between that authority and the international requirement to ascertain the freely expressed wishes of the people.

The organisation recognises that colonial territories have historically participated in independence and integration arrangements through representatives operating within colonial constitutional frameworks, and that the absence of independent statehood does not automatically invalidate such arrangements.

Nevertheless, RSNB-GiE maintains that colonial administrative authority and popular democratic consent are distinct considerations that must be examined carefully when assessing the implementation of self-determination.

A further historical distinction of substantial importance concerns the timing of Sabah's first direct election to its State Legislative Assembly.

Although local government elections and indirect Legislative Council elections took place during the period preceding Malaysia's establishment, **Sabah did not conduct its first direct election to the State Legislative Assembly until 8–23 April 1967, almost four years after the Malaysia Agreement was signed on 9 July 1963.**

This chronology is confirmed by the official records of the Malaysian Parliament.

During the parliamentary sitting of 6 June 1968, an official government report recorded that polling in the first direct election to the Sabah State Assembly had been successfully conducted between 8 and 23 April 1967.

The distinction between the 1963 indirect electoral arrangements and the 1967 direct election is fundamental to an accurate understanding of North Borneo's democratic development.

The former involved an electoral-college system operating during the final period of British colonial administration. The latter enabled Sabah's electorate to vote directly for representatives to its State Legislative Assembly.

Furthermore, Section 94 of the Malaysia Act 1963, enacted by the Parliament of the Federation of Malaya, expressly provided for a transitional period of indirect elections to the House of Representatives and the Legislative Assemblies in the Borneo States.

The original transitional provisions contemplated indirect elections continuing until the relevant dissolution following August 1968, subject to provisions permitting an earlier transition.

The eventual direct State Legislative Assembly election in Sabah in April 1967 occurred within this subsequent constitutional development.

These provisions demonstrate that the constitutional arrangements establishing Malaysia themselves contemplated a period during which direct territorial legislative elections would not be conducted in the Borneo States.

RSNB-GiE maintains that this circumstance is significant to the question of democratic consent because the political status of North Borneo had already changed substantially before its population participated in a direct State Legislative Assembly election.

The organisation does not contend that direct legislative elections constitute the only possible method through which self-determination can be exercised.

However, it maintains that the absence of such an election before Malaysia's establishment places greater importance upon examining whether the alternative electoral and consultative procedures employed in 1963 were sufficiently democratic, impartial and representative.

RSNB-GiE therefore calls for independent examination of whether the representative institutions and political processes available to North Borneo in 1963 adequately satisfied the requirements of free, informed and genuine self-determination under United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1541 (XV), particularly Principle IX.

RSNB-GiE considers it important to acknowledge that organised political opposition to the proposed constitutional arrangements existed before the Malaysia Agreement was signed.

A joint memorandum dated 9 September 1962 was submitted to the United Nations by representatives of the United National Pasok Momogun Party of North Borneo, the Party Rakyat of Brunei and the Sarawak United Peoples' Party.

The memorandum was circulated within the United Nations under document A/AC.109/PET.46, dated 17 September 1962.

The petition expressed concerns regarding the proposed transfer of sovereignty over North Borneo and Sarawak and argued that the political future of their peoples should be determined in accordance with the principle of self-determination.

Among the proposals advanced were United Nations involvement in the question, consideration of a United Nations-supervised plebiscite and examination of alternative political arrangements involving the Borneo territories.

This document demonstrates that objections concerning colonial authority, political consent and self-determination were raised contemporaneously and brought to the attention of the United Nations before the formal signing of MA63.

RSNB-GiE does not contend that the petition, by itself, establishes that a majority of the population of North Borneo opposed Malaysia.

However, the document provides historical evidence that alternative political aspirations and concerns regarding the proposed constitutional transition existed and were expressed through organised political channels.

RSNB-GiE maintains that these expressions of opposition must be considered alongside the evidence of support for Malaysia when examining whether the population was afforded an adequately informed and democratic choice concerning its political future.

The Manila Accord, signed on 31 July 1963 by the Federation of Malaya, Indonesia and the Philippines, represents an important diplomatic development concerning the proposed establishment of Malaysia.

Paragraph 10 of the Accord reaffirmed adherence to the principle of self-determination for the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Indonesia and the Philippines indicated their willingness to welcome Malaysia's formation provided that support from the peoples of the Borneo territories was ascertained by an independent and impartial authority, namely the United Nations Secretary-General or his representative.

The subsequent Joint Statement of 5 August 1963 established arrangements for this ascertainment.

These diplomatic instruments demonstrate that the question of popular consent was recognised internationally as an important consideration in the proposed constitutional transition.

RSNB-GiE acknowledges that the subsequent United Nations Malaysia Mission was established in response to these arrangements.

Nevertheless, the organisation maintains that the diplomatic commitment to ascertain public wishes must be distinguished from the separate question of whether the procedures ultimately employed were sufficient to fulfil that commitment.

RSNB-GiE therefore considers the Manila Accord and the Joint Statement of 5 August 1963 essential documentary references for an independent examination of the 1963 process.

RSNB-GiE acknowledges that the United Nations Secretary-General established a mission in August 1963 to ascertain the wishes of the peoples of North Borneo and Sarawak

regarding the proposed establishment of Malaysia.

The Mission was headed by Laurence V. Michelmore, acting as the Secretary-General's representative, and comprised eight United Nations Secretariat officers divided into two teams.

According to United Nations historical records, the Mission arrived in Sarawak on 16 August 1963 and conducted its work in the two territories until 5 September 1963.

However, RSNB-GiE considers several features of the Mission's arrangements worthy of independent scrutiny.

First, the Malaysia Agreement had already been signed on 9 July 1963, before the Mission commenced its inquiry.

Second, the Mission operated within a relatively short period immediately preceding the scheduled establishment of Malaysia.

Third, United Nations records confirm that observers from the United Kingdom and the Federation of Malaya attended the Mission's hearings throughout its work, while observers from Indonesia and the Philippines arrived on 1 September and attended hearings on 2, 3 and 4 September.

The differing periods of observer participation were significant because the Mission had been established following diplomatic discussions involving governments holding different positions concerning Malaysia's establishment.

RSNB-GiE recognises that late observer participation does not, by itself, establish that the Mission's personnel acted improperly or that its conclusions were predetermined.

Nevertheless, the organisation considers that the practical consequences of these arrangements, including the extent of international observation available during the hearings, deserve careful examination.

Further questions arise from the fact that 16 September 1963 was publicly announced as the new date for Malaysia's establishment on 29 August 1963, before the Mission had completed its work.

The United Nations Secretary-General's final conclusions were subsequently made public on 14 September 1963, only two days before Malaysia was established.

RSNB-GiE maintains that the sequencing of these events raises legitimate questions concerning the relationship between the political timetable for Malaysia's establishment and the international process intended to ascertain the wishes of the peoples of the Borneo territories.

The organisation does not assert that this chronology alone proves that the Mission was improperly influenced.

Its position is that the compressed timetable, differing observer arrangements and advance political commitment to the federation's establishment warrant independent assessment of whether the ascertainment process was sufficiently open, impartial and capable of informing the final political decision.

RSNB-GiE further considers that the Mission's work should be examined in the context of the wider diplomatic interests surrounding Malaysia's proposed establishment.

Declassified Australian diplomatic records demonstrate that Australia publicly and privately supported the formation of Malaysia before the United Nations Malaysia Mission commenced its work.

An Australian record of the June 1963 ANZUS discussions documents the position of Australia's Minister for External Affairs, Sir Garfield Barwick, that Malaysia represented the preferred political arrangement for the territories concerned.

The record also shows that Barwick opposed proposals for a plebiscite that included independence among the available alternatives, expressing concern that such a choice could divert attention from the proposed federation.

RSNB-GiE considers this evidence important because it demonstrates that influential governments supporting Malaysia held established political preferences concerning the territories' future and the methods through which public consent should be assessed.

The organisation recognises that the existence of diplomatic preferences is not unusual in international affairs and does not automatically establish unlawful interference in a United Nations process.

Nevertheless, RSNB-GiE maintains that the influence of regional security considerations, colonial policy and the strategic interests of governments supporting Malaysia should be examined when assessing the wider circumstances in which the Mission was established

and conducted.

RSNB-GiE therefore calls for relevant British, Australian, United Nations and other diplomatic records to be examined together, rather than treating any individual government's interpretation as conclusive.

RSNB-GiE acknowledges that the United Nations Secretary-General ultimately accepted the Mission's findings and concluded that a substantial majority of the peoples of North Borneo and Sarawak wished to join the proposed federation.

The Secretary-General also accepted the Mission's assessment that the procedures undertaken satisfied Principle IX of Resolution 1541.

These conclusions constitute an important part of the historical and international record and must be considered in any credible assessment of the 1963 process.

RSNB-GiE does not seek to conceal or disregard them.

However, the organisation maintains that the Mission's conclusions must be examined alongside the actual constitutional and electoral arrangements available to the people of North Borneo at the time.

The distinction between local government elections, indirect Legislative Council elections and direct State Legislative Assembly elections is particularly important.

Although the Mission considered the electoral and consultative processes of 1963 sufficient to establish the wishes of the population, Sabah's first direct State Legislative Assembly election was not conducted until April 1967.

RSNB-GiE maintains that this chronology raises a substantive question about the weight placed upon indirect political representation and consultations conducted under colonial administration.

The Mission also considered allegations concerning electoral procedures, political detentions and restrictions affecting particular individuals.

It concluded that the number of eligible voters detained for political offences or absent from the territories was insufficient to affect the electoral results materially.

RSNB-GiE recognises this conclusion while maintaining that the underlying evidence and methodology remain legitimate subjects for historical examination.

The existence of emergency measures and political detentions during the wider period should be examined with attention to their actual causes, scope and consequences.

RSNB-GiE does not assert, without further evidence, that every arrest or emergency measure was directed at suppressing peaceful opposition to Malaysia.

Nevertheless, the organisation considers it appropriate to examine whether political restrictions, colonial security arrangements or other circumstances materially affected the ability of individuals and political organisations to participate freely in discussions concerning the proposed federation.

RSNB-GiE therefore seeks independent reassessment of the historical record rather than asserting that the United Nations had already reached the legal conclusions now advanced by the organisation.

The legal character of Malaysia's establishment is another important consideration in the examination of North Borneo's constitutional transition.

Article I of the Malaysia Agreement 1963 provided that North Borneo, Sarawak and Singapore would be federated with the existing states of the Federation of Malaya and that the enlarged federation would thereafter be called Malaysia.

The constitutional arrangements were implemented through amendments to the existing federal constitutional framework.

The United Nations Office of Legal Affairs examined the consequences of these arrangements in a memorandum reproduced in the *United Nations Juridical Yearbook 1963*, under the heading "Membership of Malaysia in the United Nations."

The memorandum explained that Malaysia's establishment involved the enlargement of the Federation of Malaya, constitutional amendments and a change of name without a break in its international legal personality.

The United Nations' official membership record continues to identify 17 September 1957 as the date on which the Federation of Malaya joined the United Nations, followed by the change of name to Malaysia on 16 September 1963.

RSNB-GiE considers this documentary evidence significant because it demonstrates that Malaysia's establishment involved continuity with the existing Federation of Malaya rather than the creation of an entirely new international legal person comprising

previously sovereign and equal states.

However, RSNB-GiE acknowledges that constitutional continuity does not, by itself, establish that North Borneo's incorporation was unlawful.

The organisation's argument concerns the relationship between that constitutional structure, the colonial status of North Borneo, the authority of its representatives and the requirements of self-determination.

RSNB-GiE maintains that these issues must be examined together when assessing the historical and legal character of the 1963 arrangements.

The Agreement relating to Malaysia was signed on 9 July 1963, entered into force on 16 September 1963 and was registered with the United Nations Secretariat on 21 September 1970 under Treaty Registration No. 10760, appearing in Volume 750 of the United Nations Treaty Series.

RSNB-GiE considers the interval between the Agreement's entry into force and its registration worthy of documentary examination.

However, the organisation recognises that delayed registration does not automatically render an international agreement invalid under Article 102 of the United Nations Charter.

RSNB-GiE therefore does not rely upon delayed registration as independent proof that MA63 was void from its inception.

Its principal legal concerns instead relate to the circumstances of consent, the constitutional authority of colonial representatives and the compatibility of the integration process with the applicable principles of self-determination.

RSNB-GiE acknowledges that the declaration or establishment of a government-in-exile does not automatically confer sovereign statehood, diplomatic recognition or authority to govern a territory under international law.

The organisation does not suggest that its institutional title, by itself, establishes recognition by the United Nations or other sovereign states.

Nevertheless, RSNB-GiE maintains that the absence of recognition as a government must be distinguished from the ability of individuals and political organisations to pursue peaceful advocacy, historical research, public education and lawful international

engagement.

RSNB-GiE operates as a political and institutional platform advancing its position concerning North Borneo's historical right to self-determination.

Its claimed representative legitimacy must be developed and assessed through transparent governance, voluntary public participation, democratic accountability, respect for fundamental rights and the credibility of the mandate it seeks to establish.

RSNB-GiE does not claim that its declaration constitutes an independently verified electoral mandate from the entire population of Sabah.

Rather, it seeks to advance its objectives through the development of accountable institutions and democratic procedures that respect the principle that Sabah's political future must reflect the freely expressed wishes of its people.

The organisation maintains that peaceful political advocacy should be evaluated according to actual conduct and applicable legal standards, rather than being dismissed solely because its political interpretation differs from that of the Malaysian Government.

RSNB-GiE categorically rejects any suggestion that its peaceful advocacy for self-determination necessarily constitutes incitement to unrest, violence or unlawful political activity.

The organisation does not advocate armed rebellion, terrorism, intimidation, violence against civilians or attacks against public institutions.

Its objectives are pursued through historical and legal research, public education, peaceful assembly, democratic participation, international engagement and lawful political dialogue.

RSNB-GiE recognises that Malaysia maintains domestic criminal laws governing public order and national security.

However, the organisation maintains that allegations of criminal conduct must be assessed according to identifiable acts and the requirements of applicable law, rather than presumed solely from the expression of political opinions concerning self-determination.

The rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association remain important principles in assessing the treatment of political advocacy.

RSNB-GiE does not claim that invoking self-determination creates an unrestricted exemption from applicable criminal law.

Its position is that peaceful political expression, including historical criticism and proposals for constitutional change, should not automatically be equated with violence or criminal wrongdoing.

The organisation remains committed to peaceful, lawful and democratic methods and encourages constructive engagement rather than confrontation.

RSNB-GiE maintains that its political objectives arise from the historical circumstances of North Borneo's transition from British colonial administration into Malaysia.

For this reason, the organisation characterises its cause as one of decolonisation and self-determination rather than conventional secession from an existing sovereign state.

RSNB-GiE acknowledges that this characterisation is contested.

It further acknowledges that Sabah is presently recognised internationally as part of Malaysia and is not included on the current United Nations list of Non-Self-Governing Territories.

The organisation does not contend that international law automatically establishes an entitlement to separate statehood whenever a political movement asserts the right to self-determination.

Instead, RSNB-GiE maintains that the circumstances of North Borneo's 1963 constitutional transition justify renewed examination of whether the relevant decolonisation standards were adequately fulfilled.

The International Court of Justice's advisory opinion of 25 February 2019 concerning the Chagos Archipelago demonstrates the importance international law places upon the free and genuine expression of the will of peoples under colonial administration.

RSNB-GiE recognises that the Chagos case involved different historical and legal circumstances and did not determine the legal status of Sabah or the validity of MA63.

Nevertheless, the organisation considers the principles discussed in that opinion relevant to the broader examination of colonial consent and the implementation of self-determination.

RSNB-GiE therefore seeks a reasoned legal and historical assessment rather than presenting its interpretation as a conclusion already established by an international court.

RSNB-GiE respects the responsibility of journalists and media organisations to report differing opinions concerning controversial political and constitutional questions.

However, the organisation considers that reporting on North Borneo's constitutional history should distinguish between established documentary facts, competing legal interpretations, political opinions and allegations concerning organisational conduct.

RSNB-GiE encourages *The Sun Malaysia* and other media organisations to examine the relevant United Nations documents, British parliamentary records, Malaysian parliamentary records, diplomatic correspondence, the Manila Accord and the Malaysia Agreement 1963.

These documents establish that North Borneo's political transition involved complex questions of colonial administration, representative authority, international diplomacy and public consent.

In particular, the documented distinction between the indirect elections of 1963 and Sabah's first direct State Legislative Assembly election in April 1967 should be recognised when assessing the democratic character of North Borneo's constitutional transition.

The organisation welcomes rigorous scrutiny of its own claims and considers that comparable standards of factual accuracy and legal precision should apply to all participants in the debate.

RSNB-GiE remains prepared to engage respectfully with journalists, historians, legal scholars and members of the public through evidence-based discussion.

RSNB-GiE calls for an independent historical and international legal examination of North Borneo's constitutional transition in 1963.

Such an examination should address the constitutional authority through which North Borneo entered the Malaysia Agreement, the development of democratic institutions under British colonial administration, the methods used to ascertain public consent and the application of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1541.

It should also examine the significance of the 1963 indirect Legislative Council elections, the fact that Sabah's first direct State Legislative Assembly election was not conducted until April 1967, and the implications of these circumstances for assessing the democratic legitimacy of the 1963 transition.

Furthermore, the examination should consider the 1962 petition submitted to the United Nations, the Manila diplomatic arrangements, the work and findings of the United Nations Malaysia Mission, the available electoral evidence and the wider political circumstances surrounding Malaysia's establishment.

Particular attention should be given to distinguishing the international legal continuity of the Federation of Malaya from the separate question of whether North Borneo's incorporation satisfied the relevant standards governing colonial integration.

The examination should consider fairly both the evidence supporting the existing constitutional arrangements and the objections raised concerning the legitimacy and adequacy of the process.

RSNB-GiE invites independent historians, international legal scholars, researchers, civil society organisations and relevant international institutions to examine these matters objectively.

The organisation encourages peaceful engagement with the Malaysian Government and other relevant parties where such engagement may contribute to historical clarity, democratic participation and respect for fundamental human rights.

Any future political process concerning Sabah's constitutional status should be transparent, peaceful, inclusive, genuinely democratic and consistent with applicable international law.

The Republic of Sabah North Borneo Government-in-Exile reaffirms its commitment to the peaceful, democratic and lawful pursuit of self-determination.

RSNB-GiE recognises Malaysia's existing international status and acknowledges that the United Nations Secretary-General accepted the conclusions of the 1963 Malaysia Mission.

Nevertheless, the organisation maintains that the historical processes surrounding North Borneo's incorporation into Malaysia remain legitimate subjects for scholarly examination

and reasoned legal debate.

The documentary record establishes that North Borneo remained under British colonial administration when the Malaysia Agreement was signed on 9 July 1963, that its democratic institutions were still developing, and that the indirect elections to its Legislative Council were completed only after the Agreement had already been signed.

The record further confirms that Sabah's first direct State Legislative Assembly election was conducted between 8 and 23 April 1967, almost four years after the establishment of Malaysia.

This distinction is central to RSNB-GiE's concern regarding whether the political arrangements operating in 1963 adequately demonstrated the freely expressed and informed wishes of the people of North Borneo.

The historical record also establishes that organised political opposition to the proposed constitutional arrangements existed before Malaysia's establishment, that the Malaysia Agreement preceded the United Nations Malaysia Mission, and that the Mission operated within a limited period immediately before the federation came into existence.

These facts do not, individually or collectively, constitute an existing judicial determination that MA63 was invalid.

However, RSNB-GiE maintains that they provide substantial grounds for independent examination of the constitutional authority, political consent and international legal principles involved in North Borneo's 1963 transition.

RSNB-GiE will continue to pursue this examination through peaceful political advocacy, public education, documentary research, international engagement and democratic participation.

The organisation rejects violence, intimidation and coercion as means of advancing its objectives.

Its position remains that the historical question of North Borneo's decolonisation deserves careful examination and that the people of Sabah must remain central to any legitimate discussion concerning their political future.

RSNB-GiE maintains that the future of Sabah must ultimately rest upon the freely expressed and informed wishes of its people, pursued through peaceful,

democratic and lawful means.

ENDS.

ISSUED BY:

Office of the President
Republic of Sabah North Borneo
Government-in-Exile (RSNB-GiE)

17 October 2026

Status: Revised Edition
Original Statement: 23 September 2025

Note: This publication constitutes a revised and expanded edition of the press statement originally issued by the Republic of Sabah North Borneo Government-in-Exile (RSNB-GiE) on 23 September 2025, in response to media reports questioning its legal standing, political legitimacy and advocacy for Sabah's self-determination.

The revised edition incorporates additional historical and legal documentation concerning North Borneo's colonial constitutional arrangements, the democratic authority of its representatives, the distinction between indirect elections in 1963 and Sabah's first direct State Legislative Assembly election in 1967, the 1962 petition submitted to the United Nations, and the circumstances surrounding the United Nations Malaysia Mission.

These revisions are intended to improve historical accuracy, legal precision and institutional transparency. They do not constitute a withdrawal of RSNB-GiE's position concerning Sabah's right to self-determination or its advocacy for the peaceful, democratic and lawful examination of North Borneo's decolonisation.

The original statement dated 23 September 2025 remains part of RSNB-GiE's official historical record.

DOCUMENTARY REFERENCES

The references below are provided to support independent historical and legal examination of the matters discussed in this statement. Their inclusion does not imply that the United Nations, any government, court or institution endorses RSNB-GiE's political objectives or legal interpretations.

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Particularly Article 1(2), concerning self-determination, and Article 102, concerning treaty registration.

Official UN Charter

2. United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1514 (XV), 14 December 1960.

Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

United Nations Digital Library

3. United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1541 (XV), 15 December 1960.

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Resolution text

4. United Kingdom House of Commons, 20 March 1963.

Legislatures (Members). Parliamentary written answer by Duncan Sandys concerning North Borneo's nominated Legislative Council and the transition to indirect elections. HC Deb, Vol. 674, c. 73W.

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United Nations Official Record — PDF

9. United Nations Document A/AC.109/PET.46, 17 September 1962.

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United Nations Digital Library

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United Nations Treaty Series, Volume 550, No. 8029, particularly paragraph 10 concerning ascertainment of the wishes of the peoples of the Borneo territories.

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11. Joint Statement by the Federation of Malaya, Indonesia and the Philippines, 5 August 1963.

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International Court of Justice — Case 169

18. The Sun Malaysia, 18 September 2025.
Self-declared regime devoid of legal standing and *'Govt-in-exile' group may incite unrest, undermine unity: Expert*.
First Article | Second Article

Source: https://rsnbgie.com/news/rsnb-gie-responds-to-claims-concerning-its-legal-standing-and-calls-for-independent-examination-of-north-borneos-1963-constitutional-transition · Test copy generated 21 October 2026 for the RSNB-GiE document archive.

REPUBLIC OF SABAH NORTH BORNEO GOVERNMENT-IN-EXILE

RSNB-GiE · rsnbgie.com

STATEMENT · 11 OCTOBER 2026

STATEMENT CONCERNING REPORTED MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT WILLINGNESS TO ENGAGE OVERSEAS ORGANISATIONS

The Republic of Sabah North Borneo Government-in-Exile (RSNB-GiE) has taken note of media reports dated 10 October 2026 concerning statements by Datuk Mustapha Sakmud, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Sabah and Sarawak Affairs), expressing willingness to engage with overseas groups claiming government-in-exile status.

RSNB-GiE acknowledges the reported openness to discussion and considers that any potential engagement should be clarified through official written communication.

The organisation maintains its stated commitment to peaceful, lawful and democratic advocacy concerning the historical, constitutional and self-determination questions affecting North Borneo.

As the reported remarks have not been accompanied by an invitation specifically addressed to RSNB-GiE, the organisation does not regard formal negotiations as having commenced.

Any decision concerning participation in future discussions would be subject to internal authorisation, legal advice, and mutually agreed procedures concerning the scope, representation, location and conduct of the meeting.

Issued by:

Martini Ellen Gumpiling
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Advocacy
Republic of Sabah North Borneo
Government-in-Exile

11 October 2026
Melbourne, Australia

Source: https://rsnbgie.com/news/statement-concerning-reported-malaysian-government-willingness-to-engage-overseas-organisations-1 · Test copy generated 21 October 2026 for the RSNB-GiE document archive.

REPUBLIC OF SABAH NORTH BORNEO GOVERNMENT-IN-EXILE

RSNB-GiE · rsnbgie.com

STATEMENT · 28 SEPTEMBER 2026

STATEMENT OF CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF TUN DR HASMAH MOHAMAD ALI

The Republic of Sabah North Borneo Government-in-Exile (RSNB-GiE) extends its deepest condolences to Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, his family, relatives and loved ones following the passing of his beloved wife, Tun Dr Hasmah Mohamad Ali.

The passing of a life partner after many decades together is a profound personal loss. At this difficult time, the Government-in-Exile conveys its sincere sympathy to Tun Dr Mahathir and the entire family as they mourn the loss of a wife, mother, grandmother and respected public figure.

Tun Dr Hasmah will be remembered for her long record of public service, particularly her contributions to medicine, social welfare and community service. Throughout her life, she was widely recognised for her dedication, compassion and commitment to the well-being of others.

At moments of bereavement, political differences and historical disagreements should give way to humanity, dignity and respect for those experiencing personal loss.

The Republic of Sabah North Borneo Government-in-Exile therefore joins others in expressing its sincere condolences to Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his family during this period of mourning.

We extend our thoughts and sympathy to the family and wish them strength, comfort and peace as they remember the life and legacy of Tun Dr Hasmah Mohamad Ali.

With deepest condolences and respect,

REPUBLIC OF SABAH NORTH BORNEO
GOVERNMENT-IN-EXILE (RSNB-GiE)

28 September 2026

Source: https://rsnbgie.com/news/statement-of-condolences-on-the-passing-of-tun-dr-hasmah-mohamad-ali · Test copy generated 21 October 2026 for the RSNB-GiE document archive.

REPUBLIC OF SABAH NORTH BORNEO GOVERNMENT-IN-EXILE

RSNB-GiE · rsnbgie.com

STATEMENT · 27 SEPTEMBER 2026

Canberra Event and Historic Flag Ceremony

In my capacity as Minister of Justice and International Law of the Republic of Sabah North Borneo Government-in-Exile, I welcome the successful and peaceful event held in Canberra on 26 September 2026.

The event achieved its objective of highlighting the history and aspirations of the people of Sabah and Sarawak. The Historic Flag Ceremony conveyed part of that history through the flags and invited the public to reflect on the political future of our homeland. In Canberra, our message was delivered clearly: Let Borneo Speak. Let the World Listen.

Flags carry memory, identity and questions of political authority. The ceremony invited us to examine the historical record, listen to the voices of the people concerned, and discuss their future openly. Read the history of our homeland and examine all the evidence. Historical and legal claims must be carefully tested against documentary evidence, while the wishes of the people must be heard through peaceful and democratic means.

I would like to thank Sabah Sarawak Keluar Malaysia - SSKM Australia, Borneo Rights Action Force - BORAF and Sabah Sarawak Rights Australia & New Zealand - SSRANZ for their support of this event. I also extend my appreciation to the organisers, participants and everyone who contributed to its success.

Let us continue together in a peaceful struggle to achieve the full sovereign independence that we believe has been delayed since 1963. Let us pursue this aspiration with knowledge, unity and respect for the right of the people to determine their own future.

Ray Chalmer Jefferson

Minister of Justice and International Law

Republic of Sabah North Borneo

Government-in-Exile

27 September 2026

Source: https://rsnbgie.com/news/canberra-event-and-historic-flag-ceremony-3 · Test copy generated 21 October 2026 for the RSNB-GiE document archive.

REPUBLIC OF SABAH NORTH BORNEO GOVERNMENT-IN-EXILE

RSNB-GiE · rsnbgie.com

ANNOUNCEMENT · 21 SEPTEMBER 2026

PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATION – PARLIAMENT HOUSE, CANBERRA

The Republic of Sabah North Borneo Government in Exile (RSNB-GiE) hereby announces that a Peaceful Demonstration will be held at Parliament House, Canberra, Australia, with the following details:

Date: Saturday, 26 September 2026
Time: 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM
Venue: Parliament House, Canberra, Australia

This gathering will provide a public space for participants to peacefully express their views, share their perspectives, and raise awareness concerning matters relating to Sabah, Sarawak and Borneo through a lawful, peaceful and non-violent public assembly.

“LET BORNEO TALK. THE WORLD LISTEN.”

Together for Peace. Together for Justice.

Sabahans, Sarawakians, members of the wider Borneo community, friends, supporters, and members of the public who are interested are welcome to attend.

All participants are requested to maintain a peaceful, respectful and orderly atmosphere throughout the event, comply with applicable Australian laws and safety requirements, and respect the rights of others.

RSNB-GiE emphasises that the gathering is to be conducted in a peaceful, responsible, orderly and non-violent manner at all times.

This announcement may be shared with Sabahans, Sarawakians, members of the Borneo community in Australia, and others who may be interested in the event.

Source: https://rsnbgie.com/news/peaceful-demonstration-parliament-house-canberra-1 · Test copy generated 21 October 2026 for the RSNB-GiE document archive.

REPUBLIC OF SABAH NORTH BORNEO GOVERNMENT-IN-EXILE

RSNB-GiE · rsnbgie.com

ANNOUNCEMENT · 9 SEPTEMBER 2026

BORNEO RISING SUMMIT 2026 Sabah - Sarawak Independence Conference

OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

MINISTRY OF INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION & SABAHAN AFFAIRS

REPUBLIC OF SABAH NORTH BORNEO
GOVERNMENT-IN-EXILE

The Ministry of Internal Administration & Sabahan Affairs would like to invite all Sabahans, including active and inactive RSNB members, supporters, and members of the wider Sabahan community, to attend the upcoming:

BORNEO RISING SUMMIT 2026
Sabah - Sarawak Independence Conference

Saturday, 12 September 2026
10:00 AM – 4:00 PM
Clayton Hall, Clayton, Victoria

The Borneo Rising Summit provides an important opportunity for Sabahans to learn more about RSNB and RSNB-GiE, our current direction, organisational development, future plans, and the roles Sabahans can play in contributing towards our collective objectives.

We especially encourage Sabahans who have skills, experience, knowledge, or a genuine

willingness to contribute to come forward and explore opportunities to participate within the administrative and organisational structure of RSNB-GiE.

Our organisation requires committed individuals from different backgrounds and areas of expertise. Every contribution, whether through administration, community engagement, research, media, planning, fundraising or other areas, can play an important role in strengthening our organisation.

For existing members who have been inactive, this is also an opportunity to reconnect, meet the team, understand the current direction of the organisation, ask questions, and identify where you may be able to contribute.

We welcome Sabahans who wish to learn, participate and be part of the continuing development of RSNB-GiE.

Come, listen, participate and be part of the journey.

Suzila Idrus
Minister of Internal Administration & Sabahan Affairs
Republic of Sabah North Borneo
Government-in-Exile

Source: https://rsnbgie.com/news/borneo-rising-summit-2026-sabah-sarawak-independence-conference-1 · Test copy generated 21 October 2026 for the RSNB-GiE document archive.

REPUBLIC OF SABAH NORTH BORNEO GOVERNMENT-IN-EXILE

RSNB-GiE · rsnbgie.com

ANNOUNCEMENT · 7 SEPTEMBER 2026

BORNEO RISING SUMMIT 2026

WELCOME TO BORNEO RISING SUMMIT 2026

We warmly welcome everyone to the Borneo Rising Summit 2026 – Sabah-Sarawak Independence Conference, a platform for meaningful dialogue, exchange of ideas and collective reflection on the future of Sabah, Sarawak and North Borneo.

This gathering brings together voices from different backgrounds to share perspectives, strengthen understanding and encourage thoughtful discussion on our history, identity, rights and aspirations for the future.

Guided by the spirit of:

“Beyond the broken wings, to the unshakable hope, Sabah’s future is in our hands.”

this summit is a call for unity, awareness and hope as we continue building a stronger tomorrow for our people.

Date: Saturday, 12 September 2026

Time: 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Location: Clayton Hall, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Let us come together, bring our voices forward, share our perspectives and help shape the future with courage, vision and determination.

Everyone is welcome.

BORNEO RISING SUMMIT 2026

Sabah-Sarawak Independence Conference

Sharing Perspectives. Building Our Tomorrow.

Source: https://rsnbgie.com/news/borneo-rising-summit-2026 · Test copy generated 21 October 2026 for the RSNB-GiE document archive.

REPUBLIC OF SABAH NORTH BORNEO GOVERNMENT-IN-EXILE

RSNB-GiE · rsnbgie.com

STATEMENT · 29 AUGUST 2026

SABAH DAY 2026 IN MILDURA: CELEBRATING THE ROOTS, IDENTITY AND UNITY OF THE SABAHAN DIASPORA

SABAH DAY CELEBRATION 2026 – MILDURA, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA

MILDURA, VICTORIA

The Sabah and Borneo communities in Australia will gather in Mildura, Victoria, on 29 August 2026 for Sabah Day Celebration 2026, a community event aimed at commemorating Sabah's history, celebrating its rich cultural heritage, and strengthening connections among Sabahans living far from their homeland.

With the theme:

"Honouring Our Roots. Celebrating Our Identity."

Sabah Day Celebration 2026 carries the message that although Sabahans are now living in many parts of the world, their connection to their homeland, history, culture and identity should never be lost.

The event, which will take place from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm, is organised by the Republic of Sabah North Borneo Government-in-Exile (RSNB-GiE) in collaboration with several Borneo organisations and communities.

The choice of Mildura as the location for Sabah Day carries its own significance.

Mildura is one of the areas in Australia where members of the Sabah and Borneo communities live and earn their livelihoods. Many arrived as workers and migrants before building lives, families and friendships within the wider Australian community.

For this reason, the organisers believe that events celebrating Sabah's identity should not be concentrated solely in major cities.

Sabah exists wherever Sabahans are.

Holding Sabah Day in Mildura sends a message that diaspora communities, even when small and located thousands of kilometres from their homeland, can continue to play an important role in preserving their culture, history and connections between generations.

It is also a recognition of Sabahans who work and build their lives in regional Australia.

One of the main objectives of the Sabah Day Celebration is to provide younger generations, particularly children from Sabahan families who were born or raised outside Sabah, with opportunities to learn about their family heritage.

They should be given the opportunity to discover Sabah's history, food, music, languages, traditional attire, arts and the diversity of communities that make up Sabah.

Sabah is home to an extraordinarily diverse population, including the Kadazan, Dusun, Murut, Rungus, Bajau, Bisaya, Brunei, Kedayan, Orang Sungai, Lundayeh, and many other communities.

This diversity should not be something that divides the people of Sabah.

Instead, it represents one of Sabah's greatest strengths.

Sabah Day Celebration 2026 also carries the message that a shared identity should transcend differences in ethnicity, religion, district, language and background.

The event provides a space for people to meet, share experiences, enjoy culture and food, build friendships, and strengthen connections among the Sabah, Sarawak and wider Borneo communities, as well as with the broader Australian community.

The organisers believe that unity cannot be built through slogans alone.

It must begin through human connections, through meeting one another, conversation, culture, mutual respect and a willingness to understand each other.

The presence of Sabahan communities overseas is also part of the continuing journey of the people of Sabah.

Today, many Sabahans work, study, conduct business and build careers in Australia and other countries around the world.

These diaspora communities carry with them experiences, skills and knowledge gained abroad.

These connections should continue to be nurtured because the Sabahan diaspora has the potential to serve as a bridge between Sabah and the wider world in areas such as education, skills development, professional expertise, business, technology, culture and people-to-people relations.

Sabah Day in Mildura represents one small step towards building and strengthening those connections.

Sabah Day Celebration 2026 carries a simple message:

No matter how far we travel from home, we should never forget where we come from.

Thousands of kilometres of distance should not sever a person’s connection with their history and culture.

Living in a new country does not mean that a person must forget their homeland.

Instead, the experience of living abroad can enrich our perspectives and help future generations understand that they can be part of the wider global community while continuing to value and honour their family roots.

On 29 August 2026, from Mildura, Victoria, Sabahans and friends of Borneo will gather together in one spirit:

Honouring Our Roots.
Celebrating Our Identity.
Strengthening Our Unity.

Sabah may be far from Mildura, but Sabah remains close to our hearts.

Issued by,

Timothy S Arambala
Minister of Planning, Development & Infrastructure
Republic of Sabah North Borneo
Government-in-Exile

29 AUGUST 2026

Source: https://rsnbgie.com/news/sabah-day-2026-in-mildura-celebrating-the-roots-identity-and-unity-of-the-sabahan-diaspora · Test copy generated 21 October 2026 for the RSNB-GiE document archive.

REPUBLIC OF SABAH NORTH BORNEO GOVERNMENT-IN-EXILE

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ANNOUNCEMENT · 17 AUGUST 2026

SABAH DAY CELEBRATION 2026

OFFICIAL INVITATION

SABAH DAY CELEBRATION 2026

“Honouring Our Roots. Celebrating Our Identity.”

The Republic of Sabah North Borneo Government-in-Exile (RSNB-GiE) warmly invites all Sabahans, Sarawakians, Borneans, friends, supporters and members of the wider Australian community to join us for the Sabah Day Celebration 2026 in Mildura, Victoria.

Date: Saturday, 29 August 2026
Time: 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM
Location: Mildura, Victoria, Australia

Sabah Day is an important occasion for us to come together in unity, remember our history, honour our roots, celebrate our cultural identity and reflect upon the journey and aspirations of the people of Sabah.

This celebration is more than a gathering. It is an opportunity for Sabahans living away from our homeland to reconnect with one another, strengthen our sense of community and proudly share the history, traditions, cultures and identity of Sabah with our friends in Australia.

We welcome people from all backgrounds, communities and generations to participate. Whether you are Sabahan, Sarawakian, another fellow Bornean, an Australian friend or

simply someone interested in learning more about Sabah and its people, you are warmly invited to celebrate with us.

Come and experience a day of unity, culture, friendship and celebration as we honour where we came from and strengthen the bonds that bring our community together.

Let us gather under one spirit and one shared appreciation for our homeland:

HONOURING OUR ROOTS.
CELEBRATING OUR IDENTITY.

We look forward to welcoming you to Sabah Day Celebration 2026 in Mildura.

Republic of Sabah North Borneo Government-in-Exile (RSNB-GiE)

In collaboration with participating Sabah, Sarawak and Borneo community organisations.

29 August 2026 | 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM | Mildura, Victoria, Australia.

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