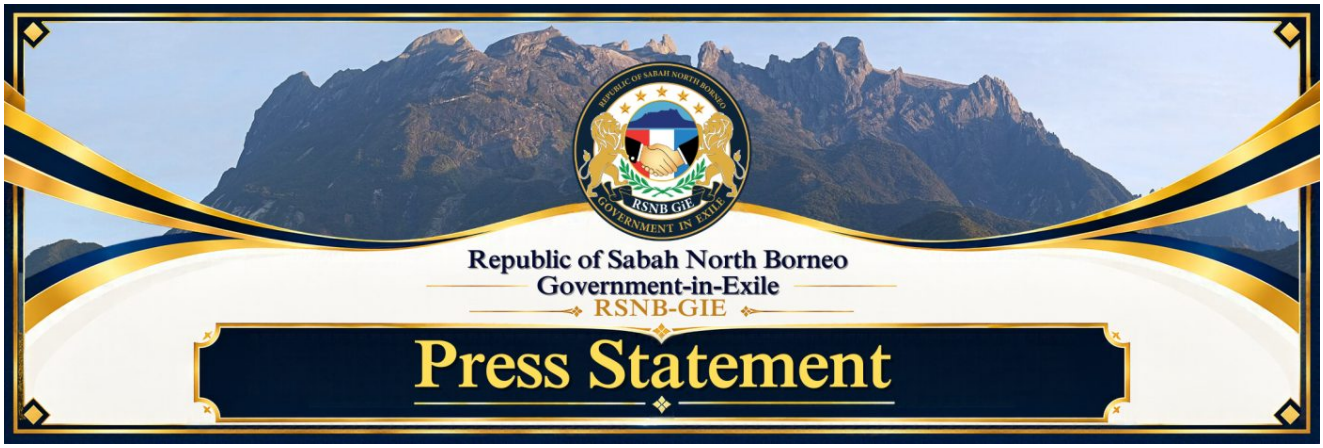
STATEMENT

RSNB-GiE Calls on Australia to Hear the Sabah Case and Support an Impartial Examination of North Borneo's Decolonisation

12 September 2026



The Republic of Sabah North Borneo Government-in-Exile, RSNB-GiE, together with participating Sabah and Sarawak civil-society organisations at the Borneo Rising Summit 2026, calls for a peaceful, evidence-based and democratic examination of the historical, constitutional and legal circumstances surrounding North Borneo, the formation of Malaysia and the unresolved questions concerning Sabah's political future.

Held under the theme, **"Beyond the Broken Wings, to the Unshakeable Hope, Sabah's Future Is in Our Hands,"** the Summit reflects both the historical pain experienced by Sabahans and the determination of a new generation to move forward with knowledge, unity, responsibility and hope. The message of the Summit is clear: the people of Sabah must understand their history, preserve the documentary record, strengthen unity across communities, pursue truth through evidence and bring

legitimate questions concerning Sabah before Australia and the wider international community through peaceful, democratic and lawful means.

RSNB-GiE does not claim that Australia created Malaysia, nor do we claim that Australia has recognised RSNB-GiE. Our position is more measured and based on the historical record. Official Australian documents show that Australia was actively involved in discussions surrounding the formation of Malaysia, supported its establishment, raised concerns internally about self-determination and the strength of popular endorsement, and later committed itself to the defence of the federation. Australian records from 1963 themselves referred to difficult questions concerning self-determination and whether a convincing expression of popular support had been established before Malaysia was proclaimed.

For this reason, RSNB-GiE believes Australia has an important historical connection to the unresolved Sabah question. Australia was not simply a distant observer. It knew North Borneo before Malaysia, studied the Malaysia proposal before Malaysia existed, recognised concerns surrounding self-determination, and subsequently supported and defended the new federation. Therefore, when Sabahans today ask for historical truth, democratic dialogue, archival transparency and a fair hearing, Australia should be prepared to listen.

RSNB-GiE respectfully asks the Australian Government to acknowledge Australia's historical involvement in supporting the formation and subsequent defence of Malaysia. Such acknowledgement does not mean accepting responsibility for every event that followed. It means recognising that Australia played an active historical role and that its official records form an important part of the historical evidence that should be available for proper examination.

RSNB-GiE also calls on Australia to open, review and facilitate access to archival records concerning North Borneo, Sarawak and the formation of Malaysia, particularly records from the period between 1961 and 1966. Existing Australian documents already show that Canberra was aware of significant concerns surrounding selfdetermination, public consent and regional security. Greater archival transparency would contribute to a fuller and more accurate understanding of what occurred during this critical period.

We further ask Australia to engage Sabahans and Sarawakians living in Australia as peaceful democratic stakeholders. Members of the diaspora should be able to raise historical, political, constitutional and human-rights concerns through lawful democratic channels without being treated as a source of instability. RSNB-GiE's advocacy in Australia is intended to remain peaceful, democratic, responsible and nonviolent.

RSNB-GiE also asks Australia to support an impartial historical and legal examination of the decolonisation of North Borneo and Sarawak and the wider question of selfdetermination. Legitimate questions remain regarding the nature of popular consent, the constitutional and legal capacity of the territories at the time, the authority of institutions and representatives involved in the Malaysia Agreement 1963, the consultation process, and the absence of a direct referendum. These questions should be examined through evidence, law, archival records and independent scholarship rather than reduced to political slogans.

At the same time, RSNB-GiE emphasises the importance of responsible legal advocacy. Research presented at the Summit distinguishes between the democratic mandate of the people, institutional authority, the legal capacity of North Borneo and Sarawak as territories, and the individual authority of those who signed the final agreement. Available records confirm that mandates existed for participation in the Inter-Governmental Committee process and that eleven representatives from North Borneo and Sarawak signed MA63. However, the source, legal instrument and precise scope of authority for every one of those signatories have not yet been identified from the sources examined so far. That evidentiary gap alone does not automatically prove that MA63 was invalid. It does, however, justify further serious archival and legal research.

For this reason, RSNB-GiE welcomes independent lawyers, academics, historians, researchers, human-rights advocates, journalists and public-policy specialists from Australia and around the world who are willing to examine Sabah's history, rights and legal position professionally, independently and with an open mind. We seek expertise that can help identify documents, evaluate competing legal arguments, strengthen public understanding and ensure that claims made in Sabah's name are supported by credible evidence.

RSNB-GiE believes that evidence must remain at the heart of the movement. If the Sabah issue is to receive serious international consideration, arguments must be capable of being examined, tested and defended. Historical documents, treaties, constitutional records, law, economic and social data, academic research and archival evidence must form the foundation of advocacy. The movement must move beyond simply saying that Sabahans are dissatisfied. It must be able to explain what the facts are, what the historical record shows, what the legal questions are, what evidence supports those questions and how the consequences have affected the people of Sabah.

The Summit also reaffirmed that peaceful advocacy is fundamental to RSNB-GiE's approach. RSNB-GiE rejects hatred, discrimination, intimidation, threats and violence. We do not seek hostility with the Malaysian people, the Australian people or any other nation. Our objective is to seek truth, justice, dignity and a fair hearing through research, public education, dialogue, lawful political engagement and responsible international advocacy.

The future of Sabah, however, cannot depend only on international attention. The Summit sends an equally important message to Sabahans themselves. Sabah cannot build a stronger future while remaining divided by ethnicity, religion, political affiliation or geography. Suluk, Bajau, Bugis, Kadazan, Dusun, Rungus, Murut, Chinese, Brunei communities and all other communities that regard Sabah as their homeland must be able to work together on issues of common interest. Diversity must not be used to divide the people of Sabah; it should become a source of strength.

The voices of rural communities, Indigenous peoples, women, young people, workers, professionals, veterans and Sabahans living in the diaspora must all be part of this journey. Every voice has value, every community deserves to be heard and no one should be left behind. The purpose of Borneo Rising Summit 2026 is therefore not merely to hold speeches, but to build deeper understanding, stronger unity, better organisation, greater political awareness, stronger research and documentation, public education, leadership development and wider national and international engagement.

The Summit also recognises that there is no shortcut to lasting change. In the short term, the priority must be awareness, education, research and documentation. In the medium term, the focus must expand to networking, engagement, communication and the development of capable future leaders. In the long term, Sabah needs stronger

institutions, a well-prepared generation of researchers, lawyers, policy thinkers, media professionals, community leaders and diplomats, and a more organised voice capable of presenting Sabah's concerns with credibility and discipline.

RSNB-GiE is not asking Australia to determine Sabah's future on behalf of its people. We are not asking Australia to create confrontation with Malaysia or destabilise the region. We are asking Australia to become a democratic interlocutor willing to listen, examine the historical evidence, support transparency and allow legitimate questions concerning Sabah's history and political future to be considered fairly and responsibly.

We cannot change the past, but we can determine how responsibly we confront it. We cannot recover the time already lost, but we can refuse to lose another generation. We cannot continue waiting for others to build Sabah's future for us, because that responsibility ultimately belongs to the people of Sabah themselves.

> ***Beyond the broken wings, to the unshakeable hope, Sabah's future is in our hands.***

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Borneo Rising Summit 2026
Melbourne, Australia.

12 September 2026

Source: https://rsnbgie.com/news/rsnb-gie-calls-on-australia-to-hear-the-sabah-case-and-support-an-impartial-examination-of-north-borneos-decolonisation