Malaysia Without Consent

> *How Sabah was incorporated into Malaysia without free and genuine agreement*

The Cobbold Commission

The Cobbold Commission of 1962 was established to assess whether the peoples of North Borneo and Sarawak supported the idea of joining Malaysia. Its findings were contested: one third of the population was said to be in favour, one third in favour with conditions, and one third opposed or wanting independence. Despite this divided result, the proposal proceeded.

A Rushed Process

The entire process of bringing Sabah into Malaysia was conducted over a remarkably short period, without allowing for genuine deliberation, education of the public, or the development of local political institutions capable of making an informed decision. The people of Sabah — many of whom were illiterate, living in remote communities, and without access to independent information — were not meaningfully consulted.

The 20-Point Agreement — Promised and Broken

Before agreeing to join Malaysia, Sabah's leaders negotiated a 20-Point Agreement that was supposed to guarantee Sabah's autonomy, its control over immigration, its share of revenue, and protections for its peoples' way of life. Virtually every significant point has been eroded or abandoned in the decades since 1963, demonstrating that the terms on which Sabah entered Malaysia were never genuinely honoured.

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