



## News Release

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### Low knowledge about Malaysia Agreement 1963

BANGI – A survey carried out by Merdeka Center between 23<sup>rd</sup> July and 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2016 found that only 22% of the respondents claimed they knew about the Malaysia Agreement 1963 while 79% of the respondents said they did not know.

The lack of knowledge cuts across the board with no significant differences except for respondents' gender, location and educational level. The male respondents were twice more likely than female respondents (male 29% and female 14%) to report knowledge about the Malaysia Agreement 1963. This pattern is consistent with the respondents' educational level where 30% of respondents who received tertiary levels are more knowledgeable compared to only 15% who were from secondary level and below. Meanwhile, 24% of urban respondents reported being knowledgeable compared to only 16% of the rural respondents.

Surprisingly, there was not much difference between respondents living in Peninsula and East Malaysia, where 21% and 23% reported knowledge of the landmark agreement respectively.

The details of the survey findings as follows:

		<b>A Great Deal/Quit a lot</b>	<b>Not very much/none at all</b>	<b>“Don’t Know/ Declined Response”</b>
Overall		22%	79%	1%
Gender	Male	29%	71%	
	Female	14%	86%	
Setting	Urban	24%	75%	
	Rural	16%	83%	1%
Ethnicity	Malay	17%	82%	
	Chinese	24%	76%	
	Indian	38%	62%	
	Muslim Bumiputra	19%	80%	1%
	Non-Muslim Bumiputra	24%	76%	
Geographical	Peninsula	21%	79%	
	East Malaysia	23%	76%	
Age	Below 40	21%	79%	
	Above 40	22%	78%	
Income	Below RM 4k	16%	84%	
	Above RM 4k	30%	70%	
Education	Secondary and lower	15%	85%	
	Tertiary	30%	70%	

## Split views on more autonomy for Sabah & Sarawak

The same survey also asked respondents if they agreed for more autonomy to be accorded to Sabah and Sarawak. Overall, the results were split: 40% of the respondents agreed for more autonomy for Sabah and Sarawak while 43% disagreed.

Interesting differences were found across ethnic lines: two-thirds of Malay respondents (66%) disagreed with more autonomy for the Sabah and Sarawak against only 20% of the Malay respondents who agreed with more autonomy. The survey found that the non-Malay community were more likely to express agreement, i.e. among the Chinese (65% agreed and 16% disagreed), Muslim Bumiputera (68% agreed and 19% disagreed) and non-Muslim bumiputera (67% agreed and 17% disagreed).

As expected, there was a sharp contrast between the respondents from Peninsula and East Malaysia on this subject. Only 33% of the Peninsula respondents agreed for more autonomy to be accorded to Sabah and Sarawak, compared to 73% of the East Malaysia respondents who agreed for more autonomy for their states.

The details of the findings as follows:

		<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>DK/NR</b>
Overall		40%	43%	17%
Gender	Male	44%	43%	13%
	Female	36%	43%	21%
Setting	Urban	41%	41%	18%
	Rural	38%	46%	16%
Ethnicity	Malay	20%	66%	14%
	Chinese	65%	16%	19%
	Indian	28%	40%	32%
	Muslim Bumiputra	68%	19%	13%
	Non-Muslim Bumiputra	67%	17%	16%
Geographical	Peninsula	34%	48%	18%
	Borneo	73%	15%	12%
Age	Below 40	44%	42%	14%
	Above 40	37%	43%	20%
Income	Below RM 4k	34%	48%	18%
	Above RM 4k	48%	39%	13%

## Which areas of autonomy

Respondents who agreed towards more autonomy for Sabah and Sarawak were asked a follow up question on the areas which they expect more control to be devolved. Respondents in the survey gave the following areas that Sabah and Sarawak should have more autonomy:-

1. Economic management 44%
2. Education policy 12%
3. Oil royalty 9%

4. Revenue sharing 6%
5. Border Security 6%
6. Domestic security /Policing 6%
7. Religious affairs 3%
8. Immigration 2%
9. Official language 1%

In our opinion, the survey reveals the low level of knowledgeability about the Malaysia Agreement among voters on both parts of the country. While this lack of knowledge seems prevalent both across Peninsular as well as Sabah and Sarawak voters, support for autonomy is high among the East Malaysians by a large majority. The lack of comprehension coupled with high sentiments associated with this issue presents a complex and potentially contentious discourse ahead for this topic.

The survey was carried out by the Merdeka Center for Opinion Research between 23<sup>rd</sup> July and 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2016. For this survey, 1,202 registered voters comprising 50% Malay, 30% Chinese, 8% Indian, 7% Muslim Bumiputera & 6% Non-Muslim Bumiputera. Respondents were interviewed by telephone. Respondents were selected on the basis of random stratified sampling along ethnicity, gender and state of residence. The interviews were carried out in the preferred language of the respondents.

#### **About Merdeka Center for Opinion Research**

Merdeka Center for Opinion Research was formally established in 2001 as an independent organization focused on public opinion research and socio-economic analysis. Merdeka's mission is to act as a bridge between ordinary Malaysians and other stakeholders with the leading members of the nation – by collecting public opinion studies and expressing them through survey results, analysis and position papers. For details, visit: [www.merdeka.org](http://www.merdeka.org)

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