

SITUATION OF HATE SPEECH AND FORB VIOLATIONS

Introduction

As of 2025, Malaysia's population is estimated at around 34 million people. The country recognises Islam as the official religion under the Constitution, with Muslims forming the majority at 63.5% of the population. Buddhism (18.7%) is the largest minority religion, followed by Christians (9.1%), Hindus (6.1%) and 2.7% who practise other religions or report no religion.

Hate Speech Incidents

Verbal Harassment

Patterns of verbal harassment in Malaysia often target Hindu, Christian, and Indigenous individuals, with slurs mocking their faiths or questioning their loyalty to the nation- such incidents reflect persistent socio-religious tensions and reinforce the privileged position of the Muslim majority in both urban and rural contexts.

Online Threats and Incitement

Social media in Malaysia has frequently been used to spread anti-minority religious rhetoric, including threats against Christian churches in Sabah and Sarawak, online campaigns targeting Hindu temples during Thaipusam and derogatory posts against Indigenous spiritual practices.

ForB Violations

Unconsented Religious Conversions and Conversion Barriers

Individuals, particularly in Sabah and Sarawak, have been registered under a different religion without their consent. Moreover, converting out of Islam is legally and socially challenging and sometimes impossible, with bureaucratic, legal and social barriers, including ostracism from the community.

Restrictions on Interfaith Participation

Legal proposals and informal social pressures have sought to prevent Muslims from participating in non-Muslim religious ceremonies (and vice versa), with a draft law criminalising participation in weddings or funerals without religious authority approval, as well as community stigma and accusations of "apostasy" that discourage interfaith engagement.