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# Malaysia's Achievements and Contributions as a Non-Permanent Member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) 2015-2016

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## Abstract

“Why Malaysia wishes to be a Non-Permanent Member in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC)” is a very interesting topic to be discussed. Malaysia is a small country in Southeast Asia but its contribution to world peace in the UNSC cannot be denied. Malaysia has experiences seated as Non-Permanent Members of UNSC since its independence in the following years; 1965-1966, 1989-1990, 1990-2000, and latest 2015-2016. Four times Malaysia has been selected as a Non-Permanent Member in the UNSC showing us that Kuala Lumpur played important role in global security. UNSC in general is composed of five permanent members and ten Non-Permanent Members. Since 1945, five permanent members are remaining the same veto power such as France, the United States, the United Kingdom, China, and Russia. Meanwhile, the other ten Non-Permanent Members of the UNSC are elected on a rotating basis by geographic region. There are five geographic regions including Asia-Pacific, Africa, Latin America and Caribbean, Eastern Europe, Western Europe, and Other. The ten Non-Permanent Members will be elected by the United Nations General Assembly for two-year terms. The main accountability of the UNSC is to preserve the international peace and safety of the world. Thus, Malaysia always wanted to be seated as a Non-Permanent Member of the UNSC. This paper will be discussed comprehensively Malaysia's experiences as a Non-Permanent Member in the year 2015-2016. Among Malaysia's achievements and contributions during two-year terms are the first; children and armed conflict issue, the second; issue of Palestine, the third; the concern over the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) to non-state entities, and other issues of humanitarians.

**Keywords:** United Nations Security Council (UNSC), Non-Permanent Members, Security, International Peace, United Nations (UN) Resolution

## Introduction

Under Article 24, para 1 of the Charter, the Security Council has main duty for the preservation of global harmony and security. Among, the functions and powers of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) are including determining the existence of a threat to the peace, taking military act against an attacker, recommending the admission of new members, and suggesting methods of adjusting such disputes or the terms of the settlement.

As an existing country in the world, Malaysia desires to be selected as a Non-Permanent Member of the UNSC from time to time. In addition, Malaysia played important roles in UNSC during its membership as a Non-Permanent Member since 1957. According to Kuziemko and Werker (2006), the wish to contribute more expressively in world affairs might inspire countries to fight for a place in the UNSC. In 1965, 1989, 1999, and 2015, Malaysia served four terms of two years each as a non-permanent UNSC member.

According to Carlos Dominguez Diaz, Spanish Ambassador to Malaysia in one interview in 2015, Malaysia's participation in UNSC is important in solving global concerns including poverty, hunger, and breaches of human rights. Meanwhile, Capt. Martin A. Sebastian, a Senior Fellow at the Maritime Institute of Malaysia (MIMA) argues that Malaysia has achieved sustainable peace through a combination of security and development activities.

## Malaysia and United Nations Security Council

Shortly after the end of the Second World War, UNSC was created in 1945. UNSC's priority responsibility is for the maintenance of international peace and security of the international world. Under the Charter of the UN, the UNSC consists of five permanent members. France, the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, and China are permanent members which are having veto rights.

Meanwhile, the UNSC has ten elected members for two-year terms. They are elected by geographic region. Malaysia is categorized under the Asia-Pacific region. Although Malaysia is not a permanent member of the Security Council, Kuala Lumpur has a chance to be elected as a Non-Permanent Member along with other UN

members. What does the mean of Non-Permanent Members seat for Malaysia? This paper is trying to answer the meaning of the Non-Permanent membership for Malaysia through experiences, achievements, and contributions. Broadly speaking, Malaysia firmly believes that all UNSC members can work together to address disputes via diplomacy and collaboration. Malaysia's mild approach is always used in promoting international peace and security.

### **Malaysia and Non-Permanent Member Seat**

Instead of five permanent members of UNSC, ten non-Permanent Members are welcome to work together in maintaining global security. These 10 seats are divided throughout the world's regions. In short, the divisions are as follows; "Asia-Pacific countries, African countries, Eastern European countries, Latin American and Caribbean countries, and Western European and Other Countries". Overall, with more than 193 numbers of states in today's world, chances to be part of non-Permanent members are compatible.

Malaysia has unique qualities as one of the Non-Permanent UNSC Members. As a result, Kuala Lumpur gained experience in four terms of membership at the UNSC since its independence 63 years back. The four terms are, in the following years: first 1965-1966, second 1989-1990, third 1990-2000, and fourth 2015-2016. Hence, this paper will only discuss Malaysia's experiences as a Non-Permanent UNSC Member in the year 2015-2016.

### **Malaysia Won UNSC Seat in 2015**

After more than 15 years since 2000, Malaysia has never gotten a seat in the UNSC. Finally, 15 years later Malaysia won a seat in the UNSC as a Non-Permanent Member. Kuala Lumpur earned 187 votes out of the total 192 votes. The voting is to fill vacancies seats among the UNSC's Non-Permanent members every two years. Also, moreover Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Anifah Aman was at the UN general assembly hall to cast the vote for Malaysia. Furthermore, to get elected as membership, Malaysia should win at least 130 votes. Fortunately, Malaysia had been elected for the fourth time starting 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015 and ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016.

### **Ramlan Ibrahim at UNSC (2015-2016)**

Starting from April 2015, Ramlan Ibrahim, former Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia was selected as Malaysia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations. He served his duty till December 2016. Along with Ramlan Ibrahim, there were diplomats from Venezuela, Spain, Angola, and New Zealand were elected together with Malaysia to serve as non-permanent members at the UNSC for a two-year term.

First and foremost, Malaysia feels that its understanding of moderation and expertise in resolving conflicts might make the UNSC a more effective force for upholding international peace. Other countries are also keeping an eye on Malaysia's efforts to promote moderation and offer alternatives to end conflicts. Between 2015-2016, at the UNSC, Ramlan was a Chairman of the Security Council's Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict. UN Resolution 2225 on children and armed conflict was accepted by the members by a majority vote in 2015, when Malaysia chaired the organization.

### **Venezuela Supportive Malaysia Seat at UNSC**

Venezuelan representative to Malaysia, Mr. Manual Guzman said in 2015 that his country continuously supports Malaysia's seat at UNSC. He agreed with Malaysia's moderation concept dealing with international security especially when this concept idea came out from Dato Seri Najib Razak, Malaysia's Prime Minister. Guzman said, "We are attentively watching all the efforts made by Malaysia to promote moderation and generate alternatives to extremism that obstructs peace, and the concerted solutions to existing conflicts in the world".

Likewise, Caracas and Kuala Lumpur work closely and support each other in UNSC. As a member of the UNSC, Venezuela advised Malaysia to contribute to protecting the people's sovereignty and limiting colonialist and imperialist intrusions by large nations. Despite working together with veto power, Malaysia as a small country should voice up its idea in every field for a better world. Subsequently, Venezuela tremendously valued Malaysia's achievement in winging the UNSC seat.

### **The European Union (EU) supportive of Malaysian Seat at UNSC**

As with Venezuela, which is encouraging Malaysia's seat in UNSC, the European Union (EU) also wishes Malaysia plays an active role as an elected member of the UNSC. Notably, the UE hope that Malaysia do an effort on the safety and elevation of the human right of all people without any insight.

Additionally, the EU understands that Malaysia has been endorsing the concept of moderation in dealing with the real world. A specific approach by Kuala Lumpur could be considered a great essential function in supporting global

peace and security. Most of the time, the EU argues, that is difficult to solve global conflicts. So that, as a new member of UNSC, Malaysia may carry out the principle of moderation involving mutual respect and solving any difficult situation through peaceful means and dialogue. By winning a seat four times in UNSC, Malaysia could become an inspiration to the other nations as well.

### **UN Resolution 2225 (2015): Issue of Children and Armed Conflict**

Malaysia was a Chairman of the Security Council's Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict. UN Resolution 2225 on children and armed conflict was approved by the members with a majority vote in 2015, under Malaysia's chairmanship. On 18 June 2015, according to the report by Security Council, UNSC was adopting Resolution 2225. The concept idea of UN Resolution 2225 was provided by Malaysia.

According to the concept note issued by the Malaysian presidency (S/2015/402), 2014 was seen as the hardest year for children affected by armed conflict notwithstanding normative gains and the rescue of some children by armed groups. Conflicts were discussed, including those in Gaza and South Sudan. The mass abduction of children, mainly by Boko Haram and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), was objective of sexual slavery and other crimes and a cause of displacement (UNSC Meeting Coverage 7466<sup>th</sup> meeting).

### **UN Resolution 2334 (2016): Issue of Palestine**

In December 2016, before the end of Malaysia's duty at UNSC, one resolution was drafted. The draft is on the issue of Palestine. Malaysia and Palestine have unique bilateral relations due to the same mutual interest. Thus, Malaysia's draft representation on the problem of Palestine was disseminated during the Malaysian seat as UNSC Non-Permanent Member. The text strongly denounced Israeli settlement activity in the Occupied Territories. The draft resolution was finally placed to a vote on December 23 thanks to Malaysia.

For almost 40 years, UNSC was trying to adopt UN Resolution 2334. Israel has no right to occupy Palestinian land including Jerusalem. The world should not recognize Capita of Israel. From 1967 till now, the Israel-Palestine conflict is never-ending. Eventually, the acceptance of UN Resolution 2334 can be perceived as a triumph for Kuala Lumpur as a Non-Permanent Member of the UNSC, supported by three important leaders of Malaysia for instance Najib Razak as Prime Minister, Anifah Aman as Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Ramlan Ibrahim as Secretary-General.

Significantly, Malaysia continues to voice up for Palestine and Palestinians through peace efforts and dialogues by using the UNSC and the UN ad platform. Malaysia gives full commitment to exploring conflict resolutions in Palestine's crisis.

### **Non-proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction to Non-State Actors**

Institute Diplomacy and Foreign Relations (IDFR) reported that Malaysia hosted a High-Level Open Debate in August 2016. The Debate is on the problem of non-proliferation of weapons of large-scale destruction to non-state actors. This can be seen as Malaysia's achievement during its membership in 2015-2016.

Meanwhile, in June 2016 in New York, Ramlan Ibrahim, spoke in the open debate namely Security Council High-Level Open Debate: "Protection of Civilians in the context of Peacekeeping Operations". As a permanent representative of Malaysia at that time, he voiced a Malaysian stand on the protection of civilians. For example, he said in 2015 alone, hundreds of thousands died during, and even while fleeing conflict. Conversely, the survivors after enduring a journey of conflict ended up in bad conditions.

Most civilians are in miserable conditions as refugees and displaced people. They are desperately in need of food, shelter, and medicine. Other civilians are at danger of dying and having their towns and homes destroyed. Conflict's horrors escalate when women and girls are made targets by terrorist organizations like Da'esh and Boko Haram and sold into sexual slavery.

### **Conclusion**

Malaysia's membership in the UN, since September 1957 is loaded with challenges. As a Non-Permanent Member of the UNSC, Kuala Lumpur's priority is to promote a moderation approach to managing international security. Besides that, mediation also as a method for peaceful settlement of disputes is applied by Malaysian diplomats. At UNSC, Malaysia always supports the improvement of UN peacekeeping processes and promotes peace building in every country developing from struggle. Malaysia also fully commits to promoting discussion on the complete UNSC reform.

Malaysia's achievements and contributions over the course of the two years seated as Non-Permanent Members of the UNSC were UN Resolution 2225 in 2015, UN Resolution 2334 in 2016, and Malaysia presented a High-Level

Open Argument in 2016 on the problem of non-proliferation of weapons of large-scale destruction to non-state actors. Despite that, Malaysia is also actively participating in the issue of humanitarian in the world. Malaysia consistently supported efforts about the humanitarian issue. Malaysia agreed the UN is the best platform to address global issues. Malaysia's moderation perception could lead to a stronger UNSC. Surprisingly, the researchers found that there have been no comprehensive studies about Malaysia as a Non-Permanent Member of the UNSC.

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### **Online Resources**

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