

Malaysia Update 2018 speakers' biographies:

Zainah Anwar is a founding member and former executive director of Sisters in Islam (SIS), a non-governmental organisation working on the rights of Muslim women within the framework of Islam. She is now the executive director of Musawah, the SIS-initiated Global Movement for Equality and Justice in the Muslim Family. She also writes a monthly column, 'Sharing the Nation', for *The Star*, the largest English-language daily in Malaysia. Her other work experience include chief program officer in the Political Affairs Division of the Commonwealth Secretariat, London; freelance writer; senior analyst for the Institute of Strategic and International Studies, Kuala Lumpur; political and diplomatic writer for *The New Straits Times*, Kuala Lumpur. Ms Anwar was also a member of the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia from 2000 to 2004. Her book, *Islamic Revivalism in Malaysia: Dakwah Among the Students* has become a standard reference in the study of Islam in Malaysia.

James Chin is the Director of the Asia Institute Tasmania, University of Tasmania. He is an expert on the governance issues in Southeast Asia, especially Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore. He also works on island states in the South Pacific. Before joining The University of Tasmania, Professor Chin was the founding head of the School of Arts And Social Sciences (SASS), Monash University, Malaysia campus. During his time in Monash Malaysia, he built SASS into the leading social science school in Malaysia. He has a strong track record of media and community engagement.

Edmund Terence Gomez is Professor of Political Economy at the Faculty of Economics and Administration, University of Malaya. He specialises in state-market relations and the linkages between politics, policies and business development. He has also held appointments at the University of Leeds (UK) and Murdoch University (Australia) and served as Visiting Professor at Kobe University (Japan), the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor) and University of California (San Diego). Between 2005 and 2008, he served as Research Coordinator at the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), in Geneva, Switzerland. Other academic appointments include Visiting Fellowships at The Australian National University, and at the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, Denmark. His international book publications include *Malaysia's Political Economy: Politics, Patronage and Profits* (Cambridge University Press, 1997) and *Minister of Finance Incorporated: Ownership and Control of Corporate Malaysia* (Palgrave-Macmillan, 2017).

Sophie Lemièrè is a Political Anthropologist at the Ash Center for Democracy in the Democracy in Hard Places program. Her research looks at the nexus between religion, politics and criminality in a comparative perspective, focussing upon the deep structure of political systems. She received her PhD from Sciences-Po, France with a study of the political role of gangs through umbrella NGOs in Malaysia. She has held research positions at RSIS-NTU in 2011 then at ARI in 2012 and has been visiting fellow at the University of Sydney, Cornell, UC Berkeley and Columbia. She is the editor of *Misplaced Democracy: Malaysian Politics and People* (2014), *Illusions of Democracy: Malaysian Politics and People Vol.2* (2017 and 2018), *Democracy Baru: Malaysia Politics and People Vol.3* (2019) and *Gangsters and Masters: Complicit Militancy and Authoritarian Politics* (2019). Sophie currently works on a political biography of Mahathir campaign 'The Last Game: Malaysian Politics in the Eye of Mahathir'.

Sumit Mandal is an Associate Professor at the School of Politics, History and International Relations at

the University of Nottingham Malaysia. He works on transregional histories of the Malay world and is currently doing research on Muslim shrines in selected locations in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and South Africa. His work develops cultural geographies that expand the scope of ethno-national terms of belonging to accommodate more multifarious and transregional histories. His research interests extend to sites of transethnic interaction in Malaysia and Indonesia. He is the author of *Becoming Arab: Creole Histories and Modern Identity in the Malay World* (Cambridge, 2018).

Serina Rahman studies marine habitat - human interactions in southwest Malaysia as well as issues of (un)sustainable development and its impact on local communities and the environment. A Visiting Fellow of the Malaysia Programme and Regional Economic Studies Centre at the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore, she has also determined the socio-economic value of seagrass habitats in this area, taking into account ecosystem services values, fisheries landing values and other local community inputs. Her other research interests include Malaysian rural voter behaviour, the anthropology of Malaysia's west coast artisanal fishermen and marine environmental education.

Wan Saiful Wan Jan is special advisor to Education Minister Dr Maszlee Malik in Malaysia. He is also former Chief Executive Officer, Institute for Democracy and Economic Affairs (IDEAS), and Wan has worked with several organizations, including the Commonwealth Policy Studies Unit think tank, the British Conservative Party's research department and Social Enterprise London. He is a columnist for *The Star*, a national newspaper in Malaysia. His opinion has been quoted by various media, including BBC, Reuters, Wall Street Journal Asia, International Herald Tribune, Al-Jazeera and The Economist. Additionally, he is also a member of the advisory board at Laureate International Malaysia.

Vilashini Somiah is the Head of Research at IMAN, a Malaysian think tank that focuses on religion, security and society. Having recently submitted her PhD thesis at the Department of Southeast Asian Studies at the National University of Singapore, she has maintained a keen interest for underrepresented narratives in Borneo and has focused a great amount of time understanding the different perspectives of these voices and their motivations. Her academic work focuses on deportation and socio-politically motivated mobility and how this impacts the way irregular migrants in Sabah engage with the Sulu Sea. She also holds two masters; a Masters in Research from the University of Malaya and another in Visual Ethnography on Southeast Asia from Ohio University. Outside of academia, she has been involved in filmmaking (*Living Stateless*, 2014) and have published articles on ethnography and socio-political issues in Malaysia in the *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, *The Affair*, *The Malay Mail Online*, *Students in Resistance*, *MalaysiaKini* and the *New Mandala*.

Ross Tapsell is a lecturer and researcher at the ANU College of Asia and the Pacific, specialising in media and culture in Island Southeast Asia. He is the author of *Media Power in Indonesia: Oligarchs, Citizens and the Digital Revolution* and co-editor of *Digital Indonesia: Connectivity and Divergence*. He has been a Visiting Fellow at The University of Indonesia (Jakarta), Airlangga University (Surabaya) and Indiana University (Bloomington, US). He has previously worked in Indonesia with *The Jakarta Post* and the *Lombok Post*. Ross is involved in a number of Southeast-Asia activities at the ANU. He is currently Director of the ANU Malaysia Institute. He is involved in the ANU Indonesia Project and the academic news/analysis website *New Mandala*. He is also on the editorial board of the scholarly journal *Asiascape: Digital Asia* (Brill).

Liew Chin Tong is Deputy Defence Minister, Malaysia. He was elected as Member of the Malaysian Federal Parliament for Kluang in the May 2013 election, and previously he was Member of Parliament for Bukit Bendera (2008-2013). Since 1999, Chin Tong has served DAP in various capacities and is now a Member of its Central Executive Committee, serving as Political Education Director. Chin Tong graduated with a degree in Political Science and an honours degree in Asian Studies from The Australian National University, and holds an International Masters in Regional Integration from the Asia-Europe Institute, University of Malaya. Chin Tong was the Executive Director of Penang Institute (previously Socio-Economic and Environmental Research Institute, SERI, 2009-2012) and Research for Social Advancement (REFSA, 2007-2011), and was formerly a Visiting Research Fellow at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), Singapore.

Meredith Weiss is Professor and Chair of Political Science at the University at Albany, State University of New York. She has published widely on political mobilisation and contention, the politics of identity and development, and electoral politics in Southeast Asia, with particular focus on Malaysia and Singapore. A forthcoming book explores the resilience of electoral-authoritarian politics in Malaysia and Singapore; other current projects include collaborative studies of 'money politics' as well as local governance in Southeast Asia, and a co-edited volume on Malaysia's 2018 elections. She co-edits the Cambridge University Press Elements book series on Southeast Asian Politics and Society.

Bridget Welsh is an Associate Professor of Political Science and the Director of Asian Outreach at John Cabot University in Rome. She specialises in Southeast Asian politics, with a particular focus on Malaysia, Myanmar and Singapore. She is a member of the Asian Barometer Survey Southeast Asia team. Her doctorate is from Columbia University, her language training at Cornell University (FALCON) and bachelor's degree from Colgate University. She is also a Senior Research Associate of the Center for East Asia Democratic Studies of National Taiwan University, a Senior Associate Fellow of The Habibie Center, a University Fellow of Charles Darwin University, a Senior Advisor for Freedom House and a member of the International Research Council of the National Endowment for Democracy.

Hew Wai Weng is research fellow at Institute of Malaysian and International Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (IKMAS, UKM). He has been writing on Chinese Muslim identities, Hui migration, and cultural politics of urban Muslim middle-classes in Malaysia and Indonesia. He is the author of *Chinese Ways of Being Muslim: Negotiating Ethnicity and Religiosity in Indonesia* (NIAS Press, 2018).

Amanda Whiting is a legal academic and legal historian with Melbourne Law School's Asian Law Centre. She is the author of a monograph about women and politics in seventeenth-century England, and of scholarly articles, book chapters and media commentary about Malaysia on topics such as: regulation of the mass media; the history of the legal profession; human rights institutions and practices; and the relationship of women's rights, human rights and development. She is currently writing a history of the Malaysian Bar.