



THE PHILIPPINES' MARITIME CLAIMS OVER SABAH: A MALAYSIAN PERSPECTIVE

Salma Yusof¹*, Mazura Md Saman², Khairul Nizam Taib³

¹ Faculty of Defence Studies and Management, National Defence University Malaysia
Email: salma@upnm.edu.my

² Centre For Military and International Humanitarian Law, National Defence University Malaysia
Email: mazura.mdsaman@upnm.edu.my

³ Centre For Military and International Humanitarian Law, National Defence University Malaysia
Email: khairulnizam.taib@upnm.edu.my

* Corresponding Author

Article Info:

Article history:

Received date: 24.07.2025

Revised date: 15.08.2025

Accepted date: 10.09.2025

Published date: 28.09.2025

To cite this document:

Yusof, S., Md Saman, M., & Taib, K. N. (2025). The Philippines' maritime claims over Sabah: A Malaysian perspective. *International Journal of Law, Government and Communication*, 10 (41), 713-723.

DOI: 10.35631/IJLGC.1041046

This work is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)



Abstract:

This paper analyses the Philippines' maritime claims concerning Sabah within the framework of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (1982 UNCLOS). Employing a qualitative methodology, the study relies on secondary data sources including legislations, treaties, law reports, government documents and journal articles relevant to the issue. It assesses the Philippines' legal capacity to assert maritime zones in lights of its unresolved territorial claim to Sabah. The analysis also highlights the relationship between territorial sovereignty and maritime rights, particularly in relation to Malaysia's existing maritime jurisdiction over the areas. By evaluating these competing claims, the paper assesses the legal viability of the Philippines' position and its broader implications for regional stability and international dispute resolution. The findings indicate that the Philippines' claims present a complex historical, legal and geopolitical aspects that influences regional security and diplomatic relations. While both countries have expressed a commitment to resolving the dispute peacefully, the path forward remains uncertain. Continued dialogue and adherence to international legal frameworks will be essential in addressing this longstanding territorial issue.

Keywords:

Maritime Entitlement, Overlapping Maritime Claim, Philippines-Sabah Maritime Claims, Territorial Sovereignty, 1982 UNCLOS

Introduction

The territorial dispute about Sabah has historically been a contention issue between Malaysia and the Philippines, originating from the colonial times. Recently, tensions have escalated due

to the Philippines' maritime boundary assertions encroaching over Sabah's continental shelf, following the enactment of its maritime legislations, specifically, the Philippine Maritime Zones Act (Republic Act 12064) and the Philippine Archipelagic Sea Lanes Act (RA 12065). These laws define the Philippines baselines and maritime claims. Malaysia has expressed concern about the incursion of these laws into its territorial waters, as illustrated in the New Malaysia Map 1979, viewing them as an infringement of its territorial integrity. The Malaysian government has officially contested the Philippines's claim, reaffirming its sovereignty over Sabah. This incident highlights not only the complexities of the long-standing territorial dispute between the Philippines and Malaysia over Sabah, but also broader issues concerning maritime entitlements under international law, particularly the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (1982 UNCLOS). This condition has strained diplomatic relations between the governments and may affect regional stability and cooperation. This article examines the legal basis, historical context, and ramifications of the Philippines' maritime claims to the waters surrounding Sabah.

Methodology

This qualitative study utilises descriptive, historical and critical analysis to assess the legal basis for the Philippines to assert maritime zones in light of its unresolved territorial claim to Sabah. The descriptive and historical approach aims to elucidate a better understanding on how and why the circumstances (Anwarul, 2008) in which the present situation came about. This necessitates a content analysis of the relevant sources including academic journals, legislations, treaties, law reports and government documents accessible through libraries, archives and online databases. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) describe content analysis as a systematic methodology for examining and analysing data from the texts that offer context for the dispute. The results of content analysis can provide thick descriptions of particular settings or phenomenon (Puvanesvary et al. 2020).

Literature Review

Historical Context of the Sabah Dispute

The Philippines' interest in North Borneo (Sabah) began in June 1946 when it became a British Crown Colony (Kadir, 2024). Sabah was originally under the Sultanate of Brunei's rule before being ceded to the Sultanate of Sulu in 1658. The Philippines (a successor state of the Sulu Sultanate), first formally claim Sabah in 1962, against the United Kingdom, which was in possession of the territory at the time (Malindog-Uy, 2020), arguing that sovereignty remained with the Sultanate of Sulu. The move was initiated under the President Diosdado Macapagal and accelerated by President Ferdinand Marcos' more assertive policies (Kadir, 2024).

The Sabah dispute stems from the 1878 Treaty between the Sultanate of Sulu, a Muslim sovereign in the southern Philippines, and the British North Borneo Company. According to Batongbacal (2023) this agreement encompasses the northern coast of Borneo, extending from the Pandassan River in the west to the Sibucu River in the east, including all coastal settlements and islands within nine miles of the shore. The 1878 Treaty was written in Malay using the *Jawi* script. The ambiguity of the term *pajakkan* used in this agreement, has led to conflicting interpretation (Aziz & Said, 2016; Muhd Rusli & Mazlan, 2013). The Philippines perceived the Treaty as a 'lease' (Tarling, 1978), asserting that North Borneo's sovereignty belonged to the Sulu Sultanate. Nonetheless, the British construed the term as 'cession', signifying a relinquishment of sovereignty (Maxwell & Gibson, 1998).

In the year 1885, the Madrid Protocol was established through negotiation involving Spain, the United Kingdom, and Germany, affirming Spain's sovereignty over the Sulu Archipelago while relinquishing any claims to Borneo. In other words, the Protocol assigned governance of North Borneo to the British North Borneo Company, while the Sulu Archipelago and the remaining islands of the Philippines were placed under the jurisdiction of the Spanish East Indies. This agreement did not address the status of the agreement between the Sultan of Sulu and the British North Borneo Company. The Philippines became a territory of the United States in 1898, with no reference to North Borneo (Muhd Rusli & Mustafa, 2014). In 1903, Sultan Jamalul Kiram II ratified the cession of additional islands, alongside the territory stipulated in the 1878 Treaty, to the British North Borneo Company (Haller-Trost, 1998).

The Manila Accord, signed in 1963, by the Philippines, Indonesia, and the Federation of Malaya (currently Malaysia) pertains to the issue of North Borneo's inclusion in the Federation of Malaysia. The Accord acknowledged the Philippines' assertion regarding the territory and emphasised that the resolution of the dispute ought to be pursued through diplomatic and peaceful means. The matter, nonetheless, remains unsettled, resulting in the legal status of Sabah unresolved. For many years, the matter remained dormant. Kadir (2024) states “this policy of dormancy did not equate to relinquishing the claim nor did it involve actively assert it; rather, it signified setting the dispute aside to prioritise joint socio-economic development with Malaysia, with plans to revisit the issue when the circumstances deemed appropriate”.

Territorial Acquisition Under International Law

Scholars recognised several principal methods of territorial acquisition under classical international law; namely, occupation, conquest, cession, prescription and accretion. Occupation denotes the acquisition of territory that is *terra nullius*, land that is unclaimed by any entity. Oppenheim (1955) emphasises that occupation necessitates both *animus occupandi* (intention to occupy) and *corpus occupandi* (effective possession). Historically, conquest was acknowledged as a means of territorial acquisition; however, it has been deemed illegal since the adoption of the 1945 United Nations Charter (Muhd Rusli & Mustafa, 2014). Consequently, contemporary legal standards do not acknowledge any territorial acquisition derived from the threat or application of force. A state may acquire sovereignty over certain territory if it is transferred or ceded by the sovereign to another. Prescription refers to acquisition of territory by way of actual exercise of sovereignty, sustain for a reasonable duration, and accompanied by acquiescence by other states. Another method of territorial acquisition is by accretion, which involves the natural formation of new land through processes such as sedimentation or volcanic activity and is generally uncontested (Shaw, 2021).

Contemporary doctrines relating to territorial acquisition include effective control and self-determination. The show of actual, peaceful and continuous authority is what is meant by the term effective control. This may be observed in the 2002 case concerning *Sovereignty over Pulau Ligitan and Pulau Sipadan* between Malaysia and Indonesia. In the *East Timor* case, the importance of self-determination is reaffirmed over historical claim. When it comes to evaluating territorial claims, it would appear that effective control and the doctrine of self-determination are now of the fundamental importance.

1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (1982 UNCLOS) and Maritime Entitlement

The 1982 UNCLOS, often referred to as the ‘constitution of the sea’ came into force on 16 November 1994. As of June 2025, it had 170 state parties (United Nations Treaty Collection, 2025). Malaysia and the Philippines are both signatories to the 1982 UNCLOS, which defines the maritime zone wherein coastal states exercise varying degree of rights and jurisdiction, superseding the earlier 1958 Geneva Conventions. The 1982 UNCLOS established a structured system for managing marine zones and resources. Its framework balances state sovereignty with international corporation and dispute resolution. With the rise in maritime claims, the 1982 UNCLOS remains vital in managing global maritime order.

The regime of maritime zones, as outlined under the 1982 UNCLOS, comprises the territorial sea, contiguous zone, exclusive economic zone, continental shelf and high sea, each with a defined limit. A coastal state is entitled to territorial sea up to 12 nautical miles from the baseline. Article 2 of the 1982 UNCLOS stipulated that a coastal state may exercise full sovereignty within its territorial sea, subject to the right of innocent passage (Article 17). While within the contiguous zone, a coastal state is authorised to enforce laws concerning customs, taxation, immigration and pollution (Article 33). Article 56 of the 1982 UNCLOS confers upon coastal states sovereign rights to explore, exploit, conserve, and manage natural resources within their exclusive economic zones (EEZ).

The notion of the continental shelf emerged from the 1945 Truman Proclamation. Articles 76 of the 1982 UNCLOS stipulated that coastal states possess sovereign rights to explore and exploit resources in the continental shelf extending up to 200 nautical miles from the state’s baseline. The Article further stipulates that a state may assert an extended continental shelf if it can demonstrate geophysical evidence of a natural prolongation of the continental shelf beyond the 200 nautical mile limit. For that purpose, the coastal states must submit scientific data to the Commissions on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) to claim their extended shelves. Beyond the EEZ and continental shelf lies the high seas, governed by the principle of freedom of the seas. The Area, encompassing the seabed and subsoil beyond state jurisdiction, is designated as the “common heritage of the mankind” (Article 136).

Baselines

Baselines serve as the foundation for establishing a coastal state’s claims to maritime jurisdiction (Bateman and Schofield, 2008). The regulations for establishing baselines are outlined in Articles 5 and 7 of the 1982 UNCLOS. Article 5, pertaining to the normal baselines, stipulates that a coastal state’s normal baselines consist of “the low-water line along the coast as marked on large-scale charts officially recognized by the coastal state”. The other rule of establishing the baselines is straight baselines system as outlined in Article 7. The concept of baseline was originally legitimised in 1952 through the *Anglo/ Norwegian Fisheries* case. The establishment of baselines will define the outer edge of the state’s internal waters and accordingly facilitate the determination of the outer edge of each maritime zone.

At present, the Malaysian baselines are regulated by the Baselines of Maritime Zone Act 2006 and the Territorial Sea Act 2012. Section 5(1) of the 2006 Act stipulates that the baselines for the purpose of determining the maritime zones of Malaysia can be established according to the “the low-water line along the coast as marked on large-scale charts; the seaward low-water line of a reef as shown by the appropriate symbol on charts; or the low-water line on a low-

tide elevation that is situated wholly or partly at a distance not exceeding the breadth of the territorial sea from the mainland or an island”. Subsection (2) specifies that the method of straight baselines, defined as “geodesics joining the consecutive geographical coordinates of base points so declared” may be utilised to determine the maritime zones of Malaysia. Consequently, while there is a provision for general application of normal baselines, straight baselines may be employed if considered necessary (Torla, A. et al. 2015). The Malaysia’s baselines are depicted in the Malaysia New Map of 1979.

Discussion and Analysis

Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity

Sabah, previously referred to as North Borneo, became a member of the Federation of Malaya on 16 September 1963, thereby establishing itself as a constituent entity within the Federation of Malaysia. Situated at the northern tip of the island of Borneo, it is considered as the second largest state next to Sarawak. It shared border with Kalimantan, Indonesia to the south and the neighbouring state of Sarawak to the southwest. Sabah covers a total area of 73, 711 square kilometres with a coastline measuring 1450 kilometres. It is rich in timber, oil and mineral resources. Agriculture and fishing are the main livelihoods of the population.

The Malaysian government has consistently asserted that Sabah is an integral part of its territory. Malaysia claims sovereignty over Sabah based on historical title, effective occupation and self-determination. The primary argument regarding the Sabah dispute is rooted in the 1878 Treaty. The core of the matter revolves around the classification of the Treaty as a lease or a complete transfer of sovereignty (cession). For the Philippines, the 1878 Treaty was perceived as a ‘lease’. Nevertheless, the British interpreted the word *pajakkan* as ‘cession’, signifying the surrender of the sovereignty. The Philippines argued that the yearly payment from the Malaysian government served as acknowledgment of its sovereignty over Sabah. The assertion had been refuted by the Malaysian government.

Mohd Rusli and Mazlan (2013) states that, considering the British interpretation of the 1878 Treaty as ‘cession’, the sovereignty of Sabah was transferred from the Sultanate of Sulu to the British in 1878, who subsequently transferred it to Malaysia. The legal principle underlying this is articulated in the maxim *nemo dat quod non habet* meaning “no one can give that which he does not have”. In relations to this, the 1885 Madrid Protocol, negotiated between Spain, the United Kingdom, and Germany, acknowledged Spain's sovereignty over the Sulu Archipelago and relinquish all claims to Borneo. The Protocol seems to reinforce the British rule over Sabah. The principle of *uti possidetis juris* stipulates that newly established state inherit the boundaries of their former dependent’s territories. Consequently, Malaysia, as the successor to the British rule, inherited the established colonial boundaries, including Sabah.

Fernandez (2007) cited Jayakumar’s assertion that “the Philippines’ claim at most, an abstract or an inchoate based on historically derivative rights of the heirs of the Sultan of Sulu”. Since 1878, neither the Philippines nor the descendants of the Sultan have exercised sovereignty or maintained effective occupation of Sabah. The Philippines only officially presented its claim in 1962. The United Kingdom maintained effective occupation until 16 September 1963, at which point Sabah became part of Malaysia. Malaysia currently holds effective occupation and exercises sovereignty over Sabah. (Muhd Rusli & Mustafa, 2014). It is significant that the territorial title acquired through prescription process is recognised in international law and is

encapsulated in the maxim *quieta non movere* (Bautista, 2009). The claim of ‘ancestral territory’ by the Philippines holds minimal significance in the context of international law (Mohamad & Rusli, 2013). Moreover, the 2002 ruling by the International Court of Justice which awarded the sovereignty over the islands of *Sipadan* and *Ligitan*, underscored the fact that Sabah has always been part of Malaysia (Aziz & Said, 2016; Muhd Rusli & Mustafa, 2014).

Malaysia stands firm to the fact that Sabah's inclusion in Malaysia was the outcome of a legal and internationally recognised process. The 1962 (Cobbold Commission) and 1963 findings demonstrated the people of Sabah and Sarawak’s willingness to join Malaysia. In this respect, the people of Sabah exercised their right of self-determination by joining Malaysia in 1963. Shaw (2021) states that the notion of self-determination has evolved from a political ideal to a binding norm of international law, particularly in the decolonisation context. Crawford (2006) contends that self-determination, once exercised through a legitimate process generate binding legal effect. The Philippines has dismissed the idea that its sovereign claim to Sabah is irrelevant following the United Nations’ finding based on the Cobbold Commission. The Philippines argued that the United Nation’s conclusions had only obligated the Philippines to refrain from obstructing the formation of Malaysia, without necessitating the relinquishment of its claim to Sabah (Malindog-uy, 2020).

Maritime Claim and Overlapping Area

The matter concerning Sabah issue extends beyond mere territorial sovereignty. It has significant maritime implications. Maritime entitlements are generated from land territory. Consequently, who governs Sabah has a direct influence on the authority over the maritime zones that extend from its coastline. Given that Malaysia exercises *de facto* sovereignty over Sabah, it presently asserts its claim over the adjacent waters in accordance with the provisions of the 1982 UNCLOS. Without recognised sovereignty over Sabah, the Philippines cannot validly base maritime zones on it.

In pursuant to Article 76 paragraph 8 of the 1982 UNCLOS which allow coastal states located on broad continental margins to “establish the outer limit of their legal continental margin seaward of their 200 nautical mile limits”, Malaysia and Vietnam lodged a joint submission to the Commission on the Limit of the Continental Shelf on 6 May 2009 “claiming an extended continental shelf beyond the outer limit of their 200 nautical miles exclusive economic zone claims in the South China Sea”. The submission was considered legitimate, and the states had to clarify their positions on the legal status of the features and limits of their claim in the region. (De Souza et al., 2022).

The Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) objected, stating that Malaysia’s submission prejudiced the Philippines’ territorial claim over Sabah and, by extension, maritime zones generated from it. The objection was submitted on 4 August 2009. The relevant portion of the protest read:

“The Joint Submission for the Extended Continental Shelf by Malaysia and Vietnam lays claim on areas that are disputed not only because they overlap with that of the Philippines, but also because of the controversy arising from the territorial claims on some of the islands in the area including North Borneo”.

Specific to the issue of North Borneo, Malaysia asserted that the claim put forth by the Philippines has not received recognition from Malaysia. In reference to the judgment delivered regarding the case *Concerning Sovereignty over Pulau Ligitan and Pulau Sipadan*, and the “Application by the Philippines to Intervene”, Malaysia contended that the “Philippine claim to Sabah lacks foundation under international law”.

In June 2024, the Philippines formally requested that the United Nations extend its continental shelf in the West Philippine Sea, particularly in the western Palawan region, claiming its rights under the 1982 UNCLOS (Baustista, 2024). According to the 1982 UNCLOS, a coastal state’s continental shelf is the submerged extension of its land territory that extends beyond its territorial sea and up to the edge of its 200 nautical miles exclusive economic zone. Its Article 76 stipulates that a state can claim an extended continental shelf if it can prove geophysical evidence of a natural prolongation of the continental shelf beyond the 200 nautical mile limit. The Philippines’ submission indicated that the state’s continental margin extends more than 200 nautical miles from the coasts of Palawan and North Borneo (Sabah) due to the “geomorphological continuity between these landmasses and the outer edge of the continental margin” in the western Palawan area (Baustista, 2024). The Malaysian government refuted the claim, contending that the Philippines’ continental margin is projected from the baseline of Sabah, which is Malaysian territory (Lee-Brago, 2024). Baselines, which are generated from the land territory, serve as a foundation for asserting a coastal state’s claims to maritime jurisdiction. The Philippines’ action is perceived as a direct challenge to Malaysia maritime boundaries and is seen as disregarding its “indisputable sovereignty” over Sabah (Amir, 2024). Malaysia further asserts that the Philippines unilateral action violated the spirit of the 1982 UNCLOS.

Recently, the Philippines enacted two significant maritime laws: the Philippine Maritime Zones Act (Republic Act 12064) and the Philippine Archipelagic Sea Lanes Act (RA 12065). These laws define the maritime boundaries of the Philippines’ and assert its rights over areas, particularly those adjacent to Sabah. Malaysia has reiterated its apprehension of the encroachment of these laws on its territorial waters, as illustrated in the New Malaysia Map 1979, which was developed in accordance with international law (Iskandar, 2024; Noh, 2024). The Malaysian government has officially objected to the Philippines, reiterating its sovereignty over Sabah. The Malaysian Foreign Minister firmly assert that “any claim by foreign country over any part of Malaysia, including Sabah, which is independent and sovereign, lacks legal foundation under international law” (Iskandar & Harun, 2024).

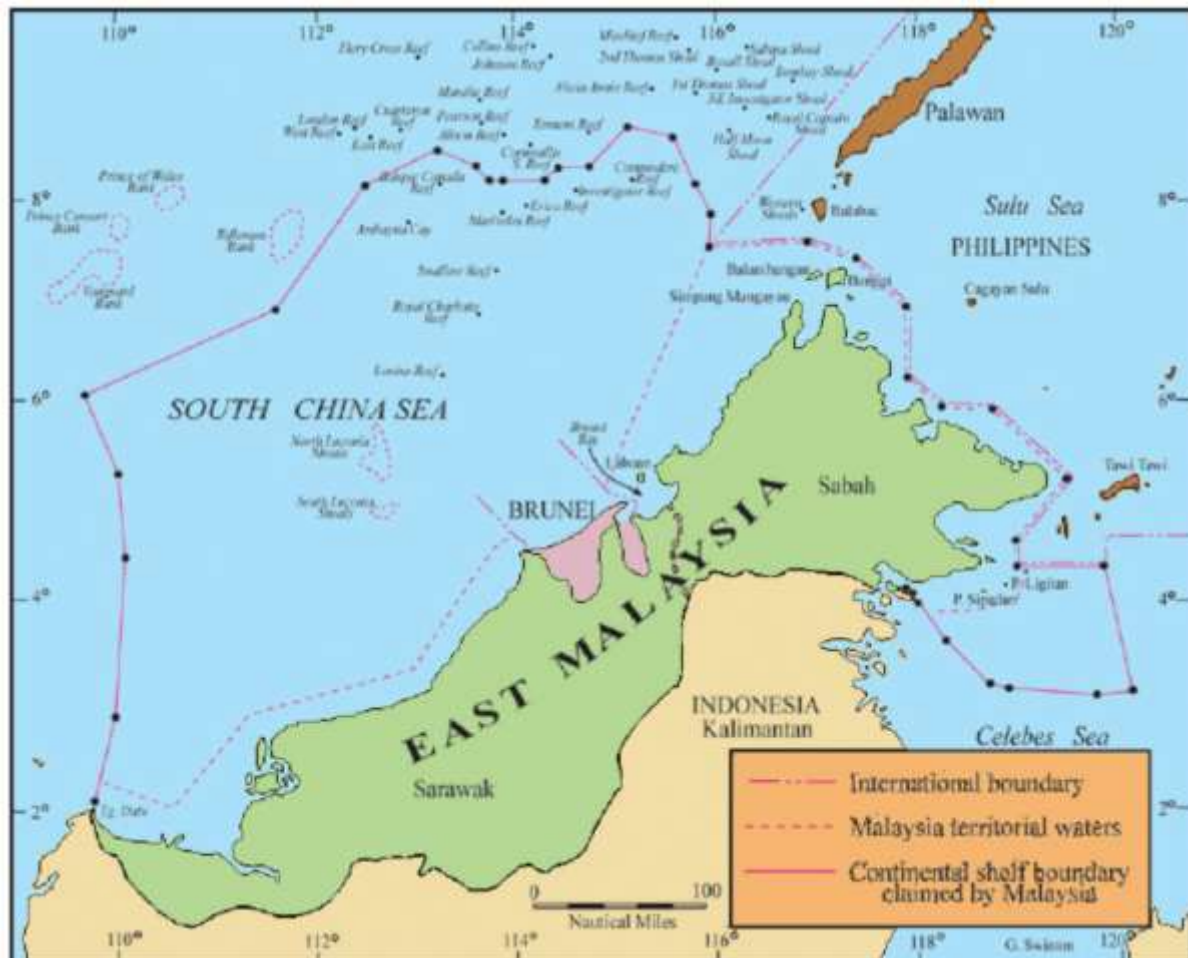


Figure 1: East Malaysia EEZ and Continental Shelf

Source: Extracted from Salleh, A. et al., 2009.

The maritime conflict is exacerbated by the long-standing claims of the successors of the Sultanate of Sulu, who assert their rights to Sabah under the 1878 Treaty. In 2018, the heirs of the Sultan of Sulu initiated legal action in Spain, pursuing restitution for the cessation of the annual payment by Malaysia in 2013. The Spanish court awarded the heirs €14.9 billion, a ruling subsequently revoked by a French court in 2024. The decision further bolster Malaysia's position over Sabah. The case and its accompanying publicity have fuelled nationalist sentiments and intensified tensions in Malaysia-Philippines relations (Amir, 2024; Kadir, 2024).

Diplomatic Ties and Current Stance

Although diplomatic relations between the two states remain cordial, the controversy persists as a sensitive and contentious issue. The submission of the CLCS and domestic laws of the Philippines have rekindled latent diplomatic issues with Malaysia. While both nations are members of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and shared commitments to regional stability, these disputes have resulted in a divergence in their diplomatic priorities. The tensions hindered possible cooperation in vital matters including security, trade and environment preservation in the region joint initiatives in counterterrorism, maritime security and environmental conservation in the Sulu-Sulawesi Sea are impeded by tense ties (Amir, 2024).

The South China Sea, including the water off Sabah, is an important trade route and resource-rich area, attracting the strategic interest of major global powers, especially the United States and China. The Philippines' recent maritime claims may unwittingly enhance the position of the non-ASEAN members, thereby complicating ASEAN's collective stand on maritime sovereignty. These issues highlight ASEAN's challenge in maintaining unity and developing clear regional policies to address territorial disputes among member states (Amir, 2024).

In a peaceful settlement of international territorial and maritime dispute, the disputing parties have several options as prescribed under Article 33 of the United Nations Charter:

“The parties to any dispute, the continuance of which is like to endanger the maintenance of international peace and peace and security, shall, first of all seek a solution by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements or other peaceful means of their own choice”.

As far as dispute resolution mechanism is concerned, states are generally amenable to the structures outlined since they allow them to retain control over the dispute and negotiate the conditions of a resolution rather than being constrained by rigid legal regulations. In this context, the decision between diplomatic dispute resolution and litigation is a strategic consideration involving economic, political and reputational factors (De Souza et al., 2022).

The Manila Accord 1963 stipulated that the Sabah claim should be resolved through amicable means including negotiation or judicial processes, with the consent of both parties involved. Despite Malaysia's steadfast position that all disputes should be handled by peaceful methods, diplomatic efforts and mutual trust (Permal, 2021; Asri et al. 2009), Malaysia has not consented to adjudication over the Sabah dispute. Under international law, a state is not legally obligated or compelled to submit the dispute unless it consents to do so. Thus, resolution approaches outlined in the Manila Accord can only be implemented when the parties willingly agree to the process (Malindog-uy, 2020). Since the Philippines pursued its claim on Sabah, there was never any indication on the part of Malaysia to budge from its consistent position (Iskandar, 2024; Noh, 2024). In the absence of Malaysia's agreement, it is expected that neither the Philippines initiatives nor the Sultanate's independent appeals to the United Nations will break the impasse. This episode underscores existing regional frictions and underlines the persistent stalemate in resolving these conflicts.

As far as the Sabah dispute is concerned, Malaysia continues to stand on firm legal footing, challenging the Philippines through diplomatic protest, reliance on the 1982 UNCLOS and judicial validations. Given the sensitive issue nature of the Sabah issue, both Malaysia and the Philippines face the challenge of finding diplomatic pathways to ease the tensions. It is believed that discussions centred on cooperation, historical reconciliation, and mutual economic interests will offer a way to lessen the hostility (Amir, 2024).

Conclusion

The Philippines' maritime claims over the waters surrounding Sabah are a critical but often understated aspect of its broader territorial dispute with Malaysia. Historical occurrences and legal agreements have shaped the narrative of sovereignty over the territory. The claims continue to influence maritime boundaries, resource entitlements, and regional security

dynamics. While both states have expressed a commitment to resolving the dispute peacefully, the path forward remains uncertain. An escalation of hostilities would undermine regional stability. Hence, as both states navigate this complex issue, ongoing dialogue and adherence to international legal frameworks will be essential in addressing this long-standing territorial issue in a manner that upholds regional peace and stability.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to acknowledge and extend special gratitude to the National Defence University, Malaysia for funding the research and publication.

References

- Amir, R. (2024, November 11). Strained relations: The Philippines maritime assertion over Sabah. *Jesselton Times*.
- Aziz, H. & Said, S. (2016). The claim over Sabah by the Sultanate of Sulu: A revision from historical and legal perspectives. *Melayu: Jurnal Antarabangsa Dunia Melayu*, 9(2), 279-294.
- Bateman, S. & Schofield, C. (2008). State Practice Regarding Straight Baselines in East Asia – Legal, Technical and Political Issues in a Changing Environment. Paper presented at International Conference on Difficulties in Implementing the Provisions of UNCLOS, Monaco.
- Batongbacal, J. (2023). Maritime boundary dispute in the Celebes Sea. *Melbourne Asia Review*. <https://doi.org/10.37839/MAR2652-550X14.5>
- Bautista, J. (2025, March 24). Philippines revives Sabah claim in note to United Nations. Retrieved from <https://asianews.network/philippines-revives-sabah-claim-in-note-to-united-nations/>
- Bautista, L. (2009). The Philippine treaty limits and territorial claim in international law. *Social Science Diliman*, 5(1-2), 107-127.
- Crawford, J. (2006). *The creation of states in international law* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- De Souza, M., Coutaz, G. & Karalekas, D. (Eds.). (2022). *Asian territorial and maritime disputes: A critical introduction*. Bristol: E-International Relations Publishing.
- Fernandez, E. S. (2007). Philippines-Malaysia dispute over Sabah: A bibliographic survey. *Asia Pacific Social Science Review*, 7(1), 53-64.
- Haller-Trost, R. (1998). *The contested maritime and territorial boundaries of Malaysia: An international law perspective*. Cambridge: Kluwer Law International.
- Hsieh H-F & Shannon, S. E. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative Health Research*, 15(9), 1277-1288.
- Iskandar, I. M. & Harun, H. N. (2024, December 10). Philippines' maritime claims have no legal basis – Mohamad. *New Straits Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2024/12/1146333/philippines-maritime-claims-have-no-legal-basis-mohamad>
- Iskandar, I. M. (2024, November 14). Malaysia to send protest note to the Philippines over maritime boundary dispute. *New Straits Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2024/11/1134475/malaysia-send-protest-note-philippines-over-maritime-boundary-dispute>
- Kadir, N. (2024). Resolving the Conflicts Between the Philippines and Malaysia: Mediation on the Sabah Dispute and Its Impact on Socio-Economic Cooperation (1986-1998). *Journal of International Studies*, 20(2), 119–147.

- Kittichaisaree, K. (1987). *The Law of the Sea Convention and Maritime Boundary Delimitation in Southeast Asia*, Singapore: Oxford University Press.
- Lee-Brago, P. (2024, July 1). Malaysia opposes Philippines continental shelf claim. *Phil Star*. Retrieved from <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/07/01/2366801/malaysia-opposes-philippines-continental-shelf-claim>
- Malindog-Uy, A. (2020). Sabah: A dispute that refuse to go away. *The ASEAN Post*. Retrieved from <https://theaseanpost.com/article/sabah-dispute-refuses-go-away>.
- Maxwell, W. G. & Gibson, W. S. (1998). *Treaties and engagements affecting the Malay states and Borneo*. J. Truscott & Son Ltd.
- Miwil, Olivia. (2024, November 10). Malaysia must counter Philippines maritime laws threatening Sabah waters - Yong. *New Straits Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2024/11/1132424/malaysia-must-counter-philippines-maritime-laws-threatening-sabah-waters>
- Mohamad, R. & Rusli, M. H. M. (2013). Self-determination vs historical title: A case of sovereignty over Sabah. *The Malaysian Insiders*.
- Mohamad, R., Rusli, M H. M. & Mazlan, M. A. (2013). World sees Sabah as part of Malaysia. *New Straits Times*.
- Muhd Rusli, M. H. & Mustafa, M. (2014). Sultan of Sulu's Sabah claim: Reminiscence of 'long-lost' sovereignty. *Journal of Social Science for Policy Implications*, 2(1), 1-5.
- Muthiah, P, Naidu, R. S., Badzis, M, Mat Nayan, N. F, Abdul Rahim, R. & Abdul Aziz, N. H. (2020). *Qualitative Research: Data Collection and Data Analysis Techniques* (2nd Edition). Sintok: Penerbit Universiti Utara Malaysia.
- Noh, M. F. (2024, November 17). Malaysia to defend sovereignty in the face of new Philippines maritime law. *The New Straits Times*. Retrieved from https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2024/11/1135641/malaysia-defend-sovereignty-face-new-philippine-maritime-laws#google_vignette
- Permal, S. (2021). Malaysia. In Noor, E. (Ed.). *The South China Sea: Realities and response in Southeast Asia*. Asia Society and Policy Institutes.
- Salleh, A., Che Mohd Razali, C. H. & Jusoff, K. (2009). Malaysia's policy towards its 1963-2008 territorial disputes. *Journal of Law and Conflict Resolution*, 1(15), 107 -116
- Shaw, M. N. (2021). *International Law* (9th ed.). UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Tarling, N. (1978). *Sulu and Sabah: A study of British Policy towards the Philippines and North Borne from the late eighteenth century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Torla, A., Yusof, S. & Mohd Kamal, M. H. (2022). The dispute between Malaysia and Indonesia over the ND6 and ND7 blocks: A Malaysian Perspective. In Lee, E. Y. J. (Ed.). *ASEAN International Law*. Singapore: Springer.
- United Nation Treaty Collection. (2025, June 20). Status of Treaties. Retrieved from <https://treaties.un.org>
- Yaqin, Anwarul. (2008). *Legal research and writing methods*. New Delhi: LexisNexis Butterworths Wadhwa Nagpur.