



Australian High Commission
Malaysia

**JOINT STATEMENT ON 5TH MALAYSIA-AUSTRALIA HIGH
LEVEL COMMITTEE (HLC) MEETING**

1. The Minister of Defence Malaysia, the Honourable Dato' Seri Haji Mohamed Khaled bin Nordin, and the Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, the Honourable Richard Marles co-chaired the 5th Malaysia-Australia High Level Committee Meeting in Kuala Lumpur on 21 August 2025.
2. Ministers reaffirmed the strength of defence cooperation between Malaysia and Australia, built on shared history, trust, and mutual respect, and shared commitment to maintaining regional stability, respect for sovereignty, international law and a rules-based regional architecture with ASEAN at its centre. Ministers noted that defence cooperation is a fundamental pillar of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.
3. Ministers further noted that this year marks 80 years since the end of World War II, when the Australian and Malaysian defence partnership was first forged. This year also marks 75 years since Australia first assisted Malaysia during the Emergency and 70 years of Australia's diplomatic presence in Malaysia.
4. Ministers agreed that strong bilateral defence collaboration is underpinned by the Malaysia–Australia Joint Defence Programme (MAJDP). They commended the current breadth and future trajectory of activities conducted under the MAJDP, including comprehensive education programs, training, and exercises.
5. Minister Khaled expressed his appreciation to Australia for supporting the infrastructure upgrade and runway refurbishment at the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) Butterworth Air Base. Ministers welcomed the significant progress achieved in the upgrade and runway works at the air base.
6. Ministers reaffirmed the importance of Operation GATEWAY, which continues to contribute to regional security and stability. As maritime nations, Ministers emphasised the importance of a peaceful and stable maritime domain. In its 45th year, Ministers agreed to continually strengthen Operation GATEWAY to meet our

contemporary needs, enhance our interoperability and support Malaysia and Australia's security in a rapidly evolving regional security environment.

7. Ministers re-affirmed their commitment to pursue a Malaysia-Australia Security of Information Arrangement and agreed next steps to make tangible progress by the next High Level Committee.
8. Ministers expressed confidence that initiatives to encourage collaboration between our defence industries, defence institutes, and Veteran Affairs Departments will strengthen bilateral defence cooperation. Ministers committed to working closely together to realise these goals in the spirit of partnership, trust, and mutual benefit.
9. Ministers also looked forward to the 2025 Future Leaders' Program hosted by Malaysia, to deepen mutual understanding of regional and global security challenges, and explore new avenues for future defence cooperation.
10. Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to ASEAN centrality, and ASEAN-led regional architecture that is open, transparent, rules-based and inclusive. Ministers acknowledged the value of the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) and its Experts' Working Groups as a means for confidence building and conflict prevention, as well as capacity building. They noted the importance of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN), and the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (SEANWFZ).
11. Ministers looked forward to the upcoming ADMM-Plus meeting on 1 November 2025. Minister Khaled expressed appreciation for Australia's strong support in co-chairing the Maritime Cybersecurity Conference in November, an initiative under the Concept Paper on the Implementation of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific from a Defence Perspective (AOIP-DP).
12. Ministers reiterated their commitment to the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA), which remains an important pillar of regional security. Guided by the principles of the Arrangement, all future initiatives will serve to unite and strengthen FPDA member countries, progressing together at a pace comfortable to all. Australia looks forward to Malaysia hosting Exercise BERSAMA LIMA 2025, including the United Kingdom hosting an FPDA VVIP Day onboard HMS Prince of Wales on 27 September 2025. The involvement of 5th generation assets in Exercise BERSAMA LIMA 2025, including Australia's F-35 Lightning IIs, participating for a second year, demonstrates our shared commitment to regional security.
13. Ministers reiterated their commitment to promoting an Indo-Pacific region that is open, stable, inclusive and transparent, underpinned by respect for sovereignty and adherence to agreed rules and norms. They also reiterated the importance of promoting communication and dialogue and practical measures to reduce the risk of misunderstanding and miscalculation as well as prevent disputes from escalating into conflict.

14. Deputy Prime Minister Marles thanked Malaysia for its leadership as Chair of ASEAN and in mediating a ceasefire to end the conflict on the shared border between Cambodia and Thailand. As ASEAN Chair, Malaysia will continue to coordinate and consult with ASEAN Member States to ensure the ceasefire's full implementation. This underscores Malaysia's steadfast commitment to the rule of law, peaceful coexistence, and multilateral cooperation in the pursuit of a just and lasting resolution.
15. Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to reinforcing regional peace and stability through continued cooperation on shared security challenges. Ministers reiterated serious concern about developments in the South China Sea that undermine peace, security and stability in the region, including dangerous and unprofessional actions at sea and in the air, and excessive maritime claims inconsistent with international law. They emphasised the importance of freedom of navigation and overflight consistent with the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which provides the comprehensive legal framework for all activities in the oceans and seas. They noted that maritime claims must be consistent with UNCLOS. They emphasised the need for all States to resolve disputes peacefully in accordance with international law, particularly UNCLOS.
16. Ministers also acknowledged the evolving threat of cybersecurity, maritime security, terrorism and violent extremism in the region, and underlined their commitment to strengthening cooperation.
17. Deputy Prime Minister Marles expressed his appreciation for the hospitality extended during his official visit and welcomed Minister Khaled to attend the next High Level Committee Meeting in Australia.

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