

# MALAYSIA

South East Asia

Upper-middle-income country

Overall Score  
50 (2020) 48 (2022) 58.5 (2024)



Score improved



**LRI RATING** Basic Access to Decent Work

0 - 50	50.5 - 60	60.5 - 70	70.5 - 80	80.5 - 90	90.5 - 100
TOTAL LACK OF ACCESS TO DECENT WORK	BASIC ACCESS TO DECENT WORK	LIMITED ACCESS TO DECENT WORK	REASONABLE ACCESS TO DECENT WORK	APPROACHING ACCESS TO DECENT WORK	ACCESS TO DECENT WORK

The country rating is based on the overall score of 0-100, with the following coding: The overall score ranges from 0 to 100, where 100 signifies the highest possible score and 0 signifies the lowest possible score. The score indicates "access to decent work" by law.

## Contextual Indicators

Population (2022)	33.94 M	Total Fertility (rate) (2022)	1.79	Female Labour Force <sup>4</sup> (2024)	A : 6.82 M	B : 51% (participation rate)
Labour Force (2024)	17.48 M	Trade Union (density) (2018)	9%	Non-Standard Employment <sup>5</sup>	A : 10% (part-time employment) (2022)	B : No Data (temporary employment)
GDP per Capita (2022)	\$11,993	Collective Bargaining (coverage) (2018)	0%	Work Injuries <sup>6</sup> (per 100,000 workers)	A : 6 (fatal) (2012)	B : 703 (non-fatal) (2012)
Poverty Headcount <sup>1</sup> (2021)	6%	Social Protection <sup>3</sup> (coverage) (2023)	29%	Minimum Wage <sup>7</sup> (April 2024)	MYR 1,500	
Informal Employment <sup>2</sup> (n.a.)	No Data	Workers per Labour Inspector <sup>8</sup> (2022)	21,062	Living Wage <sup>9</sup> (April 2024)	MYR 1,766	

Sources: World Bank | International Labour Organization | WageIndicator Minimum Wages and Living Wages Database | M = Million  
GDP per Capita in USD (\$) | wages shown in local currency and per month

## At a glance

For Malaysia, the labour legislation applicable at the national level is analysed and scored. Different rules may apply in other jurisdictions, necessitating review of other sources.

Following this approach, Malaysia's overall score is 58.5 out of 100. The overall score for Malaysia is lower than the regional average observed across South East Asia (65). Within the South East Asian region, the highest score is observed for Viet Nam (77.5).

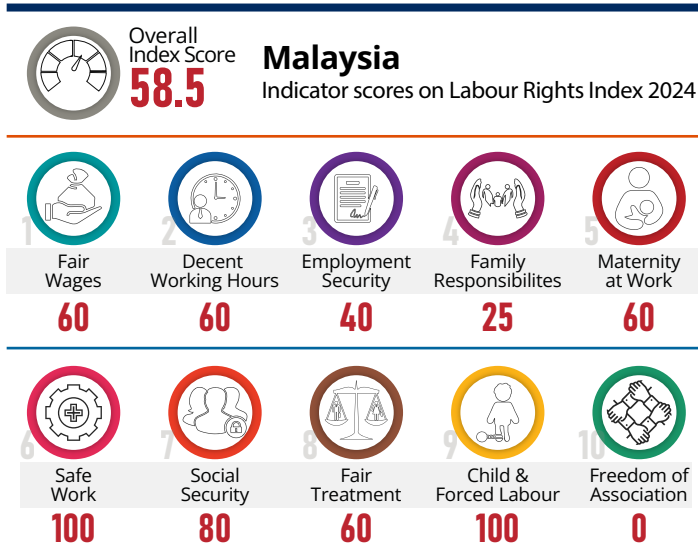
Malaysia's score has improved due to reforms in Family Responsibilities, Maternity at Work, and Fair Treatment indicators. Key changes include 7 days of paid paternity leave, extended maternity leave to 14 weeks, protection from dismissal during maternity, prohibition against sexual harassment, and employment restrictions for women.

The country scores on the Labour Rights Index must be interpreted with caution, considering also the contextual indicators like the size of the population and labour force, informal employment in the country, social protection coverage, level of economic development (as measured by GDP per capita), female labour force participation rate, incidence of non-standard employment in the form of part-time employment and temporary employment as well as work injuries, both fatal and non-fatal. Trade union density and collective bargaining coverage rates are also relevant contextual indicators to assess the state of freedom of association and collective bargaining in the country.

## About Labour Rights Index






The Labour Rights Index 2024 (LRI 2024) is a de-jure index covering 145 economies and structured around the working lifespan of a worker. In total, 46 questions or evaluation criteria are scored across 10 indicators. The overall score is calculated by taking the average of each indicator, with 100 being the highest possible score. The Index uses a rating system, ranging from "Total Lack of Access to Decent Work" to "Access to Decent Work". The Labour Rights Index aims at an active contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals, by providing necessary (complementary) insights into de jure provisions on issues covered in particular by SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Jobs), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) and SDG 16 (Strong Institutions). The Labour Rights Index scores countries based on applicable labour laws only. It does not comment on actual working conditions or labour law compliance in workplaces. The legislation that is used to score the country under the Labour Rights Index is generally national or federal level legislation. In cases where the legislation is enacted at the provincial/regional or state level, the Index analyses the labour legislation applicable to the most populous province/region or state (in federal, confederal or other complex structure states). Scoring for each country is based on labour legislation, as applicable on 1 January 2024.

\*Please check page 4 of the country profile for explanatory end notes.



For each indicator, the score ranges from 0 to 100, where 100 signifies the highest possible score and 0 signifies the lowest score. The overall score is the average of 10 indicators.

In order to measure the trend in country's legislative performance over the last edition of the Labour Rights Index (2022), the opposite legend is used.

 Score increase  Score decrease  Score adjustment  Methodological change  No change






## 1. FAIR WAGES

60

QUESTION	ANSWER	LEGAL BASIS	TREND
Does the legislation or collective negotiation set and determine the minimum wages in the country?	Yes	Minimum Wages Order 2020; S2, 23, 43-47 of the National Wages Consultative Council 2011	
Does the law require regular and timely payment of wages?	Yes	S2 & 18-24 of the Employment Act 1955; Regulation 9 of the Employment Regulations 1957	
Does the law require overtime compensation to be at least 125% of the regular hourly rate?	Yes	S60A (3) of the Employment Act 1955 (Act 265)	
Does the law require any additional compensation for working on a weekly rest day?	No	S59 & 60D of the Employment Act 1955 (Act 265)	
Does the law require additional compensation for night work?	No	No applicable legal provisions could be located	

## 2. DECENT WORKING HOURS

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Does the law stipulate general weekly working hours as 48 hours or lower?	Yes	S59, 60A, and 60D of the Employment Act 1955 (Act 265); Regulation 2 of Employment Regulations 1980	
Does the law restrict maximum working hours, including overtime, to 56 hours per week?	No	S60A(3(C)) of the Employment Act 1955 (Act 265)	
Does the law require a paid weekly rest of at least 24 consecutive hours?	Yes	S59 of the Employment Act 1955 (Act 265)	
Does the law require paid public holidays?	Yes	S60D of the Employment Act 1955 (Act 265); S8 and 9 of the Holiday Act 1951 (Act 396)	
Does the law require at least three working weeks of paid annual leave?	No	S14(1)(a) and 60E of the Employment Act 1955 (Act 265)	

## 3. EMPLOYMENT SECURITY

40

Does the law require a written employment contract or employment particulars to be given to a worker on commencement of employment?	Yes	S2, 10 & 61 of the Employment Act 1955 (Act 265)	
Does the law restrict the hiring of fixed-term contract workers?	No	S11 of the Employment Act 1955 (Act 265)	
Does the law limit the length of the probation period, including renewals, to three months?	No	No applicable legal provisions could be located	
Does the law require a 30-day notice period before employment contract termination?	Yes	S122-15 and 81E of the Employment Act 1955 (Act 265)	
Does the law require severance pay at the rate of at least two weeks of wages for every year of service?	No	Regulations 1-6 of the Employment (Termination and Lay-off Benefits) Regulations 1980	

## 4. FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

25

Does the law require a four-month parental leave for parents?	No	No applicable legal provisions could be located	
Does the law require at least one week of paid paternity leave for fathers?	Yes	S60F of the Employment Act 1955 (Act 265); S23 of the Employment (Amendment) Act 2022	
Does the law require flexible working arrangements for workers with family responsibilities?	No	S60P of the Employment Act 1955 (Act 265), amended in 2022	
Does the law require paid nursing breaks?	No	No applicable legal provisions could be located	

In order to measure the trend in country's legislative performance over the last edition of the Labour Rights Index (2022), the opposite legend is used.

● Score increase
 ● Score decrease
 ● Score adjustment
 ● Methodological change
 ○ No change

## 5. MATERNITY AT WORK

**60**

QUESTION	ANSWER	LEGAL BASIS	TREND
Does the law prohibit inquiring about pregnancy during recruitment?	No	No applicable legal prohibitions could be located	<span style="color: grey;">○</span>
Does the law require maternity leave of at least 14 weeks?	Yes	§37 & 43 of the Employment Act 1955 (Act 265); §12 of the Employment (Amendment) Act 2022	<span style="color: green;">●</span>
Does the law require cash maternity benefits to be at least two-thirds (66.67%) of a worker's former wage?	Yes	§37-44A of the Employment Act 1955 (Act 265); Maternity Allowance Regulations 1976	<span style="color: grey;">○</span>
Does the law require cash maternity benefits to be paid through a contributory social insurance or a universal benefits system or such benefits are an employer's liability?	No	§37 of the Employment Act 1955 (Act 265)	<span style="color: grey;">○</span>
Does the law protect workers from dismissals during or on account of pregnancy?	Yes	§37(4), 41A & 42 of the Employment Act 1955 (Act 265); §13 of the Employment (Amendment) Act 2022	<span style="color: green;">●</span>

## 6. SAFE WORK

**100**

Does the law require employers to provide free personal protective equipment to workers?	Yes	§24 of the Factories & Machinery Act 1967; §24 & 26 of the Occupational Safety & Health Act 1994	<span style="color: grey;">○</span>
Does the law require employers to train workers on health and safety issues?	Yes	§26 of the Factories & Machinery Act 1967; §15 of the Occupational Safety & Health Act 1994	<span style="color: grey;">○</span>
Does the law restrict work that is prejudicial to the health of the mother or the child?	Yes	§37 & 43 of the Employment Act 1955 (Act 265)	<span style="color: grey;">○</span>
Does the law provide for employment injury benefits in the event of an occupational accident or disease?	Yes	Employees' Social Security Act 1969; ISSA Country Profile for Malaysia	<span style="color: grey;">○</span>

## 7. SOCIAL SECURITY

**80**

Does the law provide for an old age benefit?	Yes	Minimum Retirement Age Act 2012; Employees Provident Fund (EPF) Act 1991	<span style="color: grey;">○</span>
Does the law provide for survivors' benefits?	Yes	§20A of the Employees' Social Security Act 1969	<span style="color: grey;">○</span>
Does the law provide for unemployment benefits?	Yes	§16-20 & 21 of the Employees' Social Security Act 1969	<span style="color: grey;">○</span>
Does the law require paid sick leave (and sickness benefits) for the first six months of sickness?	No	§60F and 15(2) of the Employment Act 1955 (Act 265)	<span style="color: grey;">○</span>
Does the law provide for invalidity benefits?	Yes	§16-20 & 21 of the Employees' Social Security Act 1969	<span style="color: grey;">○</span>

## 8. FAIR TREATMENT

**60**

Does the law require equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value?	No	§8 of the Federal Constitution of Malaysia 1957	<span style="color: grey;">○</span>
Does the law prohibit sexual harassment in employment?	Yes	§81A-H of the Employment Act 1955 (Act 265); §509 of the Penal Code 1936 (Act 574); §20 of the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act, 2022	<span style="color: green;">●</span>
Does the law prohibit discrimination in employment matters? <sup>10</sup>	No	§8 of the Federal Constitution of Malaysia 1957; §60(L)(1) of the Employment Act 1955	<span style="color: grey;">○</span>
Does the law allow women to do the same job as men?	Yes	§8 of the Federal Constitution of Malaysia 1957; §34-36 of the Employment Act 1955, deleted by Act A1651 in 2022	<span style="color: green;">●</span>
Does the law guarantee basic labour protection to the platform workers?	Yes	Employees' Social Security Act 1969; ISSA Country Profile for Malaysia	<span style="color: grey;">○</span>

## 9. CHILD AND FORCED LABOUR

100

QUESTION	ANSWER	LEGAL BASIS	TREND <sup>12</sup>
Does the law prohibit the employment of children?	Yes	§1A and 2(2A) of the Children and Young Persons (Employment) Amendment Act 2019 (Act A 1586)	<input type="radio"/>
Does the law set employment entry age equal to or higher than the compulsory schooling age?	Yes	§29A of the Education Act, 1992	<input type="radio"/>
Does the law prohibit the employment of young persons in hazardous work under the age of 18 years?	Yes	Children and Young Persons (Employment) Amendment Act 2019 (Act A1586)	<input type="radio"/>
Does the law prohibit forced labour?	Yes	§6 of the Federal Constitution of Malaysia 1957; Section 374 of the Penal Code 1936 (Act 574); §90B of the Employment Act 1955 (Act 265)	<input type="radio"/>

## 10. FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION<sup>11</sup>

0

Does the law allow workers to form and join unions of their own choice?	No	§10 of the Federal Constitution of Malaysia 1957; §27 of Trade Union Act 1959; Industrial Relations Act 1967	<input type="radio"/>
Does the law allow workers to bargain collectively with employers through their representative unions?	No	§9 & 13-17 of the Industrial Relations Act 1967; CEACR C98 Obs. 2022; ITUC Global Rights Index 2024 (Malaysia Profile)	<input type="radio"/>
Does the law provide the right to strike?	No	§25A of the Trade Union Act 1959; §38-50 of the Industrial Relations Act 1967; CEACR C98 Obs. 2022	<input type="radio"/>
Does the law prohibit imposing excessive sanctions against striking workers, including replacement of such workers?	No	§46 of the Industrial Relations Act 1967; ITUC Global Rights Index 2024 (Malaysia Profile)	<input type="radio"/>

<sup>1</sup> Proportion of population living below the national poverty line (%), as measured under the SDG 1.2.1

<sup>2</sup> Share of informal employment in total employment (%), as measured under the SDG 8.3.1

<sup>3</sup> Proportion of the country population covered by social protection floors, as measured under the SDG 1.3.1

<sup>4</sup> The female labour force is shown in absolute number (A) along with the female labour force participation rate (B)

<sup>5</sup> Non-Standard Employment has been defined as part-time employment (A) and temporary employment (B)

<sup>6</sup> Rate of fatal (A) and non-fatal work injuries (B) per 100,000 workers, as measured under the SDG 8.8.1

<sup>7</sup> Minimum Wage and Living Wage amounts are shown in local currency. The amounts are retrieved from the WageIndicator Minimum Wage Database and the WageIndicator Living Wage Database. The minimum wage amounts are those as were applicable on 1 April 2024. The Living Wage amounts are from the April 2024 data release by the WageIndicator. Given the declining share of labour income (a widely used measure of inequality, measuring the proportion of total income in a country that employed people earn by working), the contextual indicators on minimum wage and living wage are relevant.

<sup>8</sup> Robust legislation, backed by effective enforcement, forms the foundation for achieving decent work in practice. In this regard, it is relevant to see if the country has an adequate number of labour inspectors. While the Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81) calls for a "sufficient number" of inspectors to do the work required, there is currently no official definition for a sufficient number of inspectors. In its 2006 General Survey on Labour Inspection, the ILO referred to the following benchmarks on the number of labour inspectors in the country in relation to the labour force: 1:10,000 in industrial market economies, 1:15,000 in rapidly industrializing economies, 1:20,000 in transition economies, and 1:40,000 in less developed countries. The latest guidance from the ILO (2022) however emphasizes a more holistic evaluation of national context rather than solely a ratio of labour inspectors to the size of labour force.

<sup>9</sup> The Living Wage estimates shown in this country profile are for a typical family (lower bound) that comprises two adults. The number of children is determined by the country-specific fertility rate, representing the average number of children in a family. One adult is engaged for 100% of normal working hours, while the working hours of the second adult are approximated based on the national labour force participation rate. The combined wage earned by two adults, each receiving a living wage, is designed to meet the requirements for achieving a decent standard of living for the family. For further details on this, please check here: <https://wageindicator.org/salary/living-wage>

<sup>10</sup> The prohibited grounds for discrimination are "race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin, age, disability and trade union membership". A score of 1 is assigned only if a country has prohibited discrimination on at least 7 of the above 10 grounds.

<sup>11</sup> The Freedom of Association indicator of the Labour Rights Index uses Observations/Direct Requests from the ILO Committee of Experts on Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR), the US Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices (USDOS CRHRP) and the country's legal profiles under the ITUC Global Rights Index 2024 to measure a country's compliance with the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining. A country's score on the LRI's Freedom of Association indicator must also be read together with the SDG indicator 8.8.2, which measures the level of national compliance with labour rights (freedom of association and collective bargaining) based on ILO textual sources and national legislation. It has a range from 0 to 10, with 0 being the best possible score (indicating higher levels of compliance with FACB rights) and 10 the worst (indicating lower levels of compliance with FACB rights). The score for Malaysia on the latest available data of the SDG 8.8.2 is "5.59" (2022). Other than SDG 8.8.2, we suggest considering the country's score on ITUC's latest Global Rights Index. The score for Malaysia in 2024 is "5". As explained by the ITUC, "Countries are rated in clusters from 1-5+ depending on their compliance with collective labour rights, with 1 being the best rating and 5+ the worst rating a country could get. A high-rated cluster means that workers in the country have no right to their collective voice due to government failure to guarantee rights".

<sup>12</sup> In order to measure the trend in country's legislative performance over the last edition of the Labour Rights Index (2022), the legislative table indicates improvement or worsening of de-jure labour rights in country through the following colours.

● Score improved due to a positive legislative reform

● Score worsened due to a negative legislative reform

● Score is adjusted for the country due to a minor revision in the methodology for the Social Security indicator

● Score is adjusted for the country due to better access to the country's legal sources, or where the score for the Freedom of Association indicator is adjusted based on the latest reports from ILO, USDOS & ITUC Global Rights Index 2024

○ No change