

## Sabah and Sarawak, East Malaysia

**Population of Sarawak: 2,176,800**

**Population of Sabah: 3,387,880**

Known as ‘The Land Beneath the Wind’, Sabah is dominated physically by Borneo’s highest mountain, Mount Kinabalu (13,450 ft.). Sabah has a larger population of Muslims than Sarawak, but the same number of Malays. The larger population of Muslims, of various ethnic groups, is due to the influx of illegal immigrants and refugees from Indonesia and the southern Philippines—the Badjau, Bisaya and Bonggi peoples, as well as others.

Sarawak is better known as home to the head-hunting tribes of Borneo, many of whom are still living upriver in traditional longhouses. Sarawak’s Malays are found in coastal villages involved in agriculture and fishing, while in the towns Malays dominate government service sectors. Although the Malays are a minority in Sarawak, there are other important Muslim people groups often counted together with the Malays. The Melanau, one of Sarawak’s larger minority groups has many serving in high positions in the state government; also the Kadayan, Tatau, and Seboh peoples.

The jungles of Borneo are reckoned to be among the most pristine on the planet, and have been the scene of many recent protests against indiscriminate logging that has resulted in the destruction of jungle habitat and deforestation. Sarawak, a land of fast-flowing rivers, is also witnessing a massive program to develop and harness hydro-electric power through the creation of dams impacting wildlife and fauna. But the island of Borneo still holds a certain natural mystique and increasing numbers of its inhabitants are becoming involved in preservation efforts.

Among the majority Muslim population there exists one of the more vibrant and growing communities of believers in Southeast Asia. The communities of believers among the indigenous tribal peoples in East Malaysia have experienced sovereign works of God in revival. Several groups are having a marvelous impact throughout Sabah. In the 2000 census in Sarawak, 43% of the population indicated a belief in the Messiah with large numbers of indigenous tribal peoples embracing faith in Christ. Breakthroughs among the Malays could have a significant impact on the larger Malay population on the Malaysian Peninsula.



### ▶ Prayer REQUESTS

▶ *May God inspire believers to become more intentional in reaching out to their Muslim neighbors and fellow workers.*

*Pray that God would raise up people with various spiritual gifts to help the believers and help Muslims to discover the Good News.*

▶ *Pray for the establishment of culturally-relevant, indigenous communities of faith in each Muslim community.*

▶ *There are challenges for congregations which seek to welcome Muslims who discover the Messiah. Pray for them as they seek to help new believers.*