



Seventeenth session

INFORMATION FROM NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES: SUMMARIES  
OF INFORMATION TRANSMITTED UNDER ARTICLE 73 e OF THE CHARTER  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

ASIAN TERRITORIES

Singapore

In accordance with the statement of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on 27 September 1961, the Government of the United Kingdom has transmitted to the Secretary-General the following political and constitutional information on the Territory of Singapore.

This information, which was received on 2 April 1962, is herewith submitted to the General Assembly at its seventeenth session.<sup>1/</sup>

<sup>1/</sup> In accordance with General Assembly resolution 1700 (XVI) of 19 December 1961, this information is also submitted to the Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories.

SINGAPORE

POPULATION

The estimated population of Singapore (mid-1961) was 1,687,300. The division into racial groups is as follows:

Chinese . . . . .	1,269,100
Malaysians . . . . .	236,400
Indians and Pakistanis . . . .	141,500
Eurasians and others . . . . .	26,900
Europeans . . . . .	13,400
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Total	1,687,300

STATUS AND PREVIOUS HISTORY

Singapore is a State with full internal self-government under its own Head of State (Yang di-Pertuan Negara). The present constitution is based on the recommendations of a Constitutional Conference which took place in 1957, and which was attended by representatives of the major political parties in the Legislature, including Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, the present Prime Minister. At that time Singapore already had a considerable measure of self-government, with a majority of elected members in the Legislative Assembly and the Council of Ministers. The former had 25 elected members, 4 nominated members and 3 ex-officio members, while the latter consisted of 6 elected ministers and 3 ex-officio ministers. The elected members of the Council of Ministers, like the ex-officio ministers, were each given responsibility over one or more departments of government, and thus had a considerable responsibility for supervising the administration of the country as well as having a full share in policy making. The leading elected minister had the title of Chief Minister.

1957 CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE

At the 1957 Constitutional Conference, agreement was reached on a constitution which would confer full internal self-government on Singapore, leaving the British Government responsible only for the external defence and

external relations of Singapore. Under this Constitution, which is now in force, Singapore is known as the State of Singapore, and the British Governor has been replaced by a Malayan-born Head of State. The British Government is represented in Singapore by a Commissioner.

#### HEAD OF STATE

The Head of State (Yang di-Pertuan Negara) is appointed in consultation with the Government of Singapore and is a Malay. He exercises his responsibilities in the same way as the Queen's Representative in a fully independent member of the Commonwealth in relation to such functions as the appointment and dismissal of a Prime Minister, and dissolution of the Legislative Assembly. He assents to laws passed by the Legislative Assembly and exercises the prerogative of mercy.

#### CABINET

The Cabinet consists of a Prime Minister and (at present) eight other ministers, who are members of the Legislative Assembly. The Cabinet is collectively responsible to the Legislative Assembly of Singapore for the direction and control of the Government of the State. The Head of State appoints as Prime Minister that member of the Legislative Assembly who is able to command a majority, and appoints the remaining ministers on the Prime Minister's advice.

The ministers at present holding office are:

Mr. Lee Kuan Yew (Prime Minister)

Dr. Toh Chin Chye (Deputy Prime Minister)

Mr. S. Rajaratnam (Minister for Culture)

Mr. Yong Nyuk Lin (Minister for Education)

Dr. Goh Keng Swee (Minister for Finance)

Mr. Ahmad Bin Ibrahim (Minister for Labour)

Mr. Ong Pang Boon (Minister for Home Affairs)

Mr. K.M. Byrne (Minister for Health and Law)

Mr. Tan Kia Gan (Minister for National Development).

All ministers are inhabitants of Singapore.

### LEGISLATURE

The Singapore Legislature is uni-cameral, consisting of a Legislative Assembly with 51 elected members. All members of the Legislative Assembly are inhabitants of Singapore.

### ELECTORAL SYSTEM

This is based on universal adult suffrage. Members of the Legislative Assembly are elected in single member constituencies. Electors must be citizens of Singapore over the age of 21.

The last elections were held in May 1959, and yielded the following results:

<u>Party</u>	<u>Number of seats</u>	<u>Percentage of votes cast</u>
People's Action Party (Leader: Mr. Lee Kuan Yew) . . . . .	43	54.4
Singapore People's Alliance (Leader: Tun Lim Yew Hock) . . . . .	4	20.7
Liberal Socialist Party (Leader: Mr. E.K. Tan) . . . . .	None	8.2
UMNO/MCA (Leader: Dato Abdul Hamid) . . . . .	3	6.8
Workers' Party (Leader: Mr. D. Marshall) . . . . .	None	.8
Independents and other parties . . . . .	1	9.1

Following these elections Mr. Lee Kuan Yew was invited to form a first government under the new Constitution and he is the present Prime Minister. As a result of by-elections, the formation of two new parties (Barisan Socialis and United People's Party) and changes of party allegiance, the present distribution of seats in the Assembly is now as follows:

<u>Party</u>	<u>Seats</u>
People's Action Party (Leader: Mr. Lee Kuan Yew) . . . . .	26
Barisan Socialis (Leader: Dr. Lee Siew Choh) . . . . .	13

<u>Party</u>	<u>Seats</u>
Singapore People's Alliance/UMNO/MCA (Leader: Tun Lim Yew Hock) . . . . .	7
United People's Party (Leader: Mr. Ong Eng Guan) . . . . .	3
Workers' Party (Leader: Mr. D. Marshall) . . . . .	1
Independent (Mr. A.P. Rajah) . . . . .	1
	51

#### UNITED KINGDOM COMMISSIONER

The responsibilities of the British Government for the external defence and external relations of Singapore (other than trade relations, for which responsibility has been delegated to the Singapore Government) are exercised by the United Kingdom Commissioner, who is chairman of an inter-governmental committee which serves as a medium of consultation between Singapore and the British Government on matters arising from Britain's responsibility for external defence and external affairs. He also is chairman of the Internal Security Council, which serves as a medium of consultation between the Singapore and British Governments on questions of policy relating to the maintenance of public safety and public order. The other members of this Council are the Prime Minister and two other ministers of the Singapore Government, two members appointed by the British Government and one member appointed by the Government of the Federation of Malaya. Under the Constitution, Singapore ministers have full responsibility for maintaining internal law and order including control of the Police.

#### JUDICIARY

There is a High Court with unlimited jurisdiction presided over by the Chief Justice or by a puisne judge. The High Court also hears appeals from civil district courts. Appeals from the High Court are heard by the Court of Appeal composed of three judges. The Court of Appeal and the High Court in both its civil and criminal jurisdiction are collectively described as the Supreme Court. There are also civil and criminal district courts, magistrates' courts and a

juvenile court. The Chief Justice is appointed by the Head of State on the advice of the Prime Minister of Singapore, while the other Supreme Court judges are appointed by the Head of State on the advice of a Council consisting of the Chief Justice, the other judges of the Supreme Court, and the State Advocate-General. In order to safeguard the independence of the judiciary, provisions for the appointment, promotion and removal from office of judges are written into the Constitution. All judges in Singapore are local inhabitants except for, at present, the Chief Justice.

#### LOCAL PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT

The Singapore Civil Service is almost entirely locally recruited. All junior posts, and practically all senior posts (including all permanent secretaries of ministries) are filled by officers of local origin. Overseas officers, who now number about ninety, are mainly in technical posts for which, as yet, insufficient local candidates have been forthcoming. Overseas officers are replaced as and when suitably qualified local inhabitants become available. As already explained, most judges, all ministers and all members of the Legislative Assembly are inhabitants of Singapore.

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