

Who are the Pattani Malay?

The Pattani Malay are Thai Muslims of Malay ethnicity. The majority of the Pattani Malay live in South Thailand, in the border provinces of Narathiwat, Yala and Pattani. They make up over 80% of the population of these provinces. Most of the 2 million Pattani Malay live in rural villages, with only 20% in urban settings.

Livelihood



Historically, Pattani was significant in maritime trade. As a famous port, people supported themselves through fishing. Today, there are few fish factories and fish farms

in Pattani. South Thailand is also one of the most important places for rubber production in the world. Others grow fruits, vegetables, work in small businesses, or as day labourers. Thai Muslims in the South often have multiple occupations. For those who get their income from rubber tapping, sadly there is no work in the rainy season. Many struggle to make ends meet. Still others resolve to find work in Malaysia, Bangkok or the Middle East. The ongoing unrest in South Thailand has also had very negative impact on the economy and society. Narathiwat is one of the poorest provinces in Thailand.

Languages

The Pattani Malay increasingly use Thai, the national language in communications. However, for many their heart language remains "Pattani Malay," a dialect of the Malay language — similar to the dialect spoken in Kelantan, in northern Malaysia. Language and religion are closely related in South Thailand. The written form of Pattani Malay uses the Jawi script similar to Arabic.

Culture and Society



The Muslims of South Thailand are rich in cultural heritage, which is something shared by neighbouring Malaysia and Indonesia. There are very skilled craftsmen gifted at producing beautiful handicrafts, such as colourful fishing

boats called *kolae* and *batik* cloths. Malay culture is also rich in performing arts, including traditional dances, shadow plays and *silat*, a Malay martial art. Interest in performing arts seems to be diminishing today, for mixed reasons. Local food has a unique, often spicy flavour, and a meal can be a real culinary adventure.



Young people today are strongly influenced by television, popular music and films both within Thailand and overseas. They bring new ideas, as well as bad ones to society. According to a recent survey, a very high percentage of teenagers use drugs. They are mostly made of *kratom* — also a form of medicine — a tree that grows in abundance in South Thailand. Drug addiction also contributes to high unemployment in the region.

Beliefs



The majority of Thai Muslims belong to the *Sunni* sect of Islam. By and large, the Islam practiced in South Thailand

includes many animistic practices. Nevertheless, the *Da'wah* or revival movement has been very active since the 1980s. Local people have become more pious in the practice of their religion, fasting, observing prayers and promoting religious education from young. More women covering their heads shows that there is increasing Arabic influence.

Very few Pattani Malay are known to follow Jesus. Most of them are not so well off, and live scattered over a wide area. Yet many seeds have been sown over the last few decades and we trust that one day more "fruit" will spring forth!



For more information about the Pattani Malay, visit: www.apeopleloved.com/pattani-malay



Population: 2 million
Location: South Thailand
Languages: Thai, Pattani Malay

Prayer Points

Praise God that literature about Jesus is available. Pray that more Malay will have a chance to read, hear and be touched by the story of Jesus.

Pray that the Pattani Malay would experience God's power to meet their needs.

Pray for those who are disillusioned with religious rituals, that they would find new meanings and hope in Jesus.

Pray that God would reveal himself through dreams and visions.

Pray for followers of Jesus to walk faithfully with God, despite their lonely circumstances. May they have courage to pray in Jesus' name when relatives are sick, in financial need or troubled by evil spirits.

Pray that the Pattani Malay will be transformed by the Scriptures and as indigenous fellowships are established that they will transform the communities around them.

Pray for peace in the troubled southern region of Thailand, and wisdom for the government and local people to work towards agreeable resolutions.