

## DiCaprio to Cooperate in Probe into Malaysia's 1MDB

By Chloe Chavez, J.D. Candidate 2018 | November 14, 2016

[1Malaysia Development Berhad](#) (“1MDB”), Malaysia’s state-owned investment fund, was set up by Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak in 2009. 1MDB was meant to boost the Malaysian economy through strategic investments, and turn its capital city, Kuala Lumpur, into a financial hub. In early 2015, however, 1MDB began to attract negative attention after missing its payments on its \$11 billion debt, owed to banks and bondholders. Specifically, 1MDB missed the [repayment](#) of a \$563 million short-term loan that was due in December of 2014.

In July of 2015, after a six-month investigation, the [Wall Street Journal](#) revealed that almost \$700 million from an undisclosed source had gone to Prime Minister Razak’s personal accounts. He argued that the funds were not used for his personal enrichment, but channeled to help ensure that Prime Minister Razak’s political party, the [United Malays National Organization](#), stayed in power after the May 2013 election.

Earlier this year, the United States Justice Department filed a lawsuit alleging that the funds were misappropriated and laundered through accounts in the United States. Although the Justice Department did not name Prime Minister Razak in the suit, it did name his stepson Riza Aziz. Aziz produced the film “The Wolf of Wall Street” and his film company, Red Granite Capital, was accused of receiving a \$133 million tranche.

The complaint also alleged Leonardo DiCaprio’s charity, the DiCaprio Foundation, received illegal donations from 1MDB. A [spokesman](#) for the actor said that the charitable foundation would return any gifts or donations that are discovered to have come from the 1MDB fund. DiCaprio “immediately had his representatives reach out to the Department of Justice to determine whether he or his foundation, the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation, ever received any gifts or charitable donations directly or indirectly related to [the 1MDB fund], and if so, to return those gifts or donations as soon as possible.”

DiCaprio’s cooperation comes after calls by the [Bruno Manser Fund](#), a Swiss rainforest charity, to step down as a United Nations Messenger of Peace or explain his alleged ties to the 1MDB fund.