# Swatch wins legal battle against Malaysia over seized 'gay' watches



Swiss watchmaker Swatch has won a legal battle against the Malaysian government concerning the seizure of 172 watches featuring designs associated with LGBTQ+ symbols. The Kuala Lumpur High Court declared the seizure illegal, ordering the government to return the watches within a 14-day period.

The seizure occurred in May 2022, when authorities conducted raids on various Swatch outlets across Malaysia. The watches that were confiscated were part of the Pride Collection, a series that includes designs adorned with rainbow colours as well as those featuring a selection of six shades corresponding to the colours of the gay pride flag. The Malaysian Home Minister, Saifuddin Nasution, announced that the government plans to evaluate the court’s full judgement before making any decision regarding a potential appeal.

In the proceedings, the court established that the watches were taken without a warrant, which violates legal protocols. Alongside the order for their return, the court also stipulated that Swatch could seek compensation if any of the watches had been damaged during their time in custody.

The Malaysian government maintains a strict stance against same-sex relationships, with laws that impose severe penalties, including caning under Islamic legislation and lengthy prison sentences under colonial-era civil codes. This context has framed the government's actions against Swatch, as authorities cited concerns regarding the perceived moral implications of products associated with the LGBTQ+ community.

Subsequent to the initial seizures, the government enacted a wider ban on all Swatch products featuring LGBTQ+ elements. This ban extends to the designs, packaging, and promotional materials—all deemed harmful to the nation's morals under existing laws. Breaches of this legislation could result in individuals facing up to three years of imprisonment or considerable fines.

Swatch has publicly contested allegations that its products pose harm, asserting that the designs convey messages of peace and love rather than any illicit agenda. The brand’s engagement with the LGBT community through its Pride Collection aligns with a broader trend among global retailers towards inclusivity, often resulting in backlash in more conservative regions.

The recent court ruling marks a significant moment in the ongoing discourse regarding LGBT rights and representation in Malaysia, a country where such themes remain heavily stigmatised and legislated against.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/swatch-wins-malaysian-suit-watches-government-lgbtq-elements-116193428> - Corroborates the court's decision that Swatch won the suit against the Malaysian government over watches with LGBT elements and the subsequent ban on Swatch products.
* <https://www.wnky.com/i/swatch-wins-malaysian-suit-over-watches-the-government-said-had-lgbtq-elements/> - Confirms the Kuala Lumpur High Court's ruling that the watches were seized illegally without a warrant.
* <https://www.ctpost.com/news/world/article/swatch-wins-malaysian-suit-over-watches-the-19940614.php> - Supports the information that the government banned all Swatch products containing LGBT elements after the seizure.
* <https://www.scmp.com/news/asia/southeast-asia/article/3288010/malaysian-court-orders-return-swatch-lgbtq-themed-watches?module=around_scmp&pgtype=homepage> - Details the court order for the return of the seized watches and the potential for Swatch to seek compensation for any damage.
* <https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/swatch-wins-malaysian-suit-watches-government-lgbtq-elements-116193428> - Provides context on the Malaysian government's strict stance against same-sex relationships and the laws imposing severe penalties.
* <https://www.wnky.com/i/swatch-wins-malaysian-suit-over-watches-the-government-said-had-lgbtq-elements/> - Mentions the government's concerns regarding the perceived moral implications of products associated with the LGBT community.
* <https://www.ctpost.com/news/world/article/swatch-wins-malaysian-suit-over-watches-the-19940614.php> - Explains the ban on all Swatch products featuring LGBT elements, including designs, packaging, and promotional materials.
* <https://www.scmp.com/news/asia/southeast-asia/article/3288010/malaysian-court-orders-return-swatch-lgbtq-themed-watches?module=around_scmp&pgtype=homepage> - Highlights Swatch's public stance that its products convey messages of peace and love, not harm.
* <https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/swatch-wins-malaysian-suit-watches-government-lgbtq-elements-116193428> - Discusses the broader trend among global retailers towards inclusivity and the backlash in conservative regions.
* <https://www.wnky.com/i/swatch-wins-malaysian-suit-over-watches-the-government-said-had-lgbtq-elements/> - Notes the significance of the court ruling in the ongoing discourse regarding LGBT rights and representation in Malaysia.
* <https://www.ctpost.com/news/world/article/swatch-wins-malaysian-suit-over-watches-the-19940614.php> - Illustrates the tensions between corporations advocating for diversity and local laws that restrict such expressions.