

A third of undersea search for MH370 completed
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MH370 The undersea search for missing Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 has covered almost a third of its target area, Malaysian authorities said today, adding that they were confident the aircraft is in the zone.

The Boeing 777 aircraft disappeared on March 8 last year, carrying 239 passengers and crew shortly after taking off from the Malaysian capital of Kuala Lumpur, bound for Beijing.

Months of searches have failed to turn up any trace.

Malaysia, along with China and Australia, has been searching for the plane in the southern Indian Ocean, off the coast of Perth, Australia.

“Based on the available data, this is the place,” Mior Nor Badrishah Mohamad, an official of Malaysia’s civil aviation department, told a news conference today, at a presentation that showed 31.04 percent of the search area had been covered.

Authorities reiterated that they expect the undersea search of an area of 60,000 square km to be completed by May.

“If we cannot find MH370 within this area, we need to sit down again and decide what’s the best way forward, based on the data we have,” said Mior, adding that poor weather after May would make the search more difficult.

Malaysia yesterday declared the disappearance an accident, clearing the way for the airline to pay compensation to victims’ relatives.

The country’s civil aviation authorities plan to release an interim report on the investigation on March 7, a day before the first anniversary of the flight’s disappearance.

Malaysia Airlines’ crisis worsened on July 17 when its Flight MH17 from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur was shot down over Ukraine, killing all 298 people on board.

- Reuters