

Search for MH370 to be called off in early 2016

MalaysiaKini.com

June 4, 2015

The Australian-led search for missing Malaysian Airlines flight MH370 is expected to be called off early next year, Xinhua news agency reported.

Australia's Joint Agency Coordination Centre (JACC), which is leading the search in the Indian Ocean for the Boeing 777, announced today it would not continue its mission beyond the current 120,000km zone without any new information.

The announcement will come as grim news for families and friends of the 239 people on board MH370, which vanished in March last year en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing, and end any hope they had that some wreckage or evidence might be found to give a clue to the fate of the plane and its passengers.

Since the plane's disappearance, the JACC search has centred on a 1,600km arc, 2,000km west of Perth.

In April, the governments of Australia, Malaysia and China announced the remote search area would be doubled from the original 60,000 square kilometres.

But the lack of any meaningful progress forced the JACC to announce today that the search would be wound up early in 2016 unless there was a positive development in the meantime.

"In the absence of credible new information that leads to the identification of a specific location of the aircraft, governments have agreed that there will be no further expansion of the search area," said the JACC.

The isolated search area, determined by analysing scant satellite data from the plane's final hours, takes vessels more than six days to reach from Perth. Rough winter seas have also delayed recent search efforts.

"Over coming weeks, search operations will be focused in the south to take advantage of the last of the better weather in that area prior to the expected onset of continuous poor weather during winter," said the JACC statement.

"Safety of the search crews, as always, remains a priority and vessels and equipment utilised will vary to reflect operational needs particularly during winter months."

The deep underwater search, currently in choppy seas of up to 12 metres, scours the seabed to depths of more than 4,000 metres.

The speed of the search will increase when conditions improve but GO Phoenix will cease operations and return to Singapore at the end of the month.

A fourth vessel previously involved in the search, Fugro Supporter, which carried an autonomous underwater vehicle that scans the ocean bed, was withdrawn in May.

More than 50,000 square kilometres of the seafloor has already been searched so far.

- Bernama

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd

Source : <http://www.malysiakini.com/news/300707>