

## **PM: We'll spare nothing to find hikers**

**MalaysiaKini.com**

**Jun 7, 2015**

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak has vowed that no effort would be spared in the search for those stranded on Mount Kinabalu following the earthquake on Friday.

"I guarantee that all efforts are being made by government agencies to locate and rescue all those stranded on the mountains.

"The deputy prime minister as the chairperson of the National Disaster Management Committee is already in Sabah to monitor and manage the operations there," he said on his blog this evening.

He said the army is ready for deployment to the disaster area, while the Special Malaysia Disaster Assistance and Rescue Team (Smart) has is already assisting in the disaster with its team of paramedics, engineers and rescue workers.

"We should thank all those who are helping with the search, especially the mountain guides who have sacrificed much to assist the earthquake victims."

Najib said that so far, 168 victims have been rescued while there were 19 deaths. Fifty rescuers are still on site to recover five unidentified bodies, and 23 schools and infrastructure such as roads were damaged.

### **PM abroad**

Separately, according to Bernama, 16 people have been confirmed dead, while body parts believed to be from two persons are still identified.

The report quoted Sabah Tourism, Culture and Environment Minister Masidi Manjun saying that so far, the whereabouts of two persons are still unaccounted for – a Singaporean teacher and a student, who were at Southeast Asia's tallest peak as part of a school field trip.

The earthquake measuring Magnitude 6.0 on the Richter scale was centred at nearby Ranau had triggered landslides and rockfalls in the mountains, as well as causing damage to buildings in surrounding towns. Smaller aftershocks have also taken place since.

Meanwhile, Najib said he is still keeping abreast with developments in the disaster although he is abroad on an official visit.

"Although I am in Jeddah for an official visit, ministers, the National Security Council, and government agencies involved in the rescue and monitoring efforts in Sabah are keeping me informed of the latest situation," he said.

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Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/301039>