

Najib: Indian Ocean plane debris sent to France

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By Reuters

Malaysia's Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak said today that plane debris washed up on Reunion island in the Indian Ocean was "very likely" from a Boeing 777, and would be shipped to French authorities in Toulouse to verify if it came for Flight MH370.

"The location is consistent with the drift analysis provided to the Malaysian investigation team, which showed a route from the southern Indian Ocean to Africa," Najib said in a statement.

Malaysia Airlines was operating a Boeing 777 on the flight, which vanished without a trace in March last year en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing in one of the most baffling mysteries in aviation history. The plane had 239 passengers and crew aboard.

Najib said the object found on Reunion, a French overseas department in the southern Indian Ocean east of Madagascar, would be sent to the nearest office of France's crash investigation agency, the BEA, in Toulouse.

Aviation experts who have seen widely circulated pictures of the debris said it may be a moving wing surface known as a flaperon, situated close to the fuselage.

Najib also said that, despite numerous "false alarms" in the past, authorities have not given up on the search. "I promise the families of those lost that whatever happens, we will not give up," he said.

BEA had no immediate comment on the Malaysian prime minister's statement.

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