

Ukraine: Last group of M'sians scheduled to return tomorrow

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Bernama

The last group of Malaysians who managed to leave Ukraine is scheduled to return home from Warsaw, Poland, tomorrow via a commercial flight.

The Foreign Ministry said this through a statement today after the evacuation mission – involving seven citizens and two (foreign) dependents to two Malaysians – was successfully implemented by the Malaysian Embassy in Kyiv which also assisted a Singaporean.

The group, led by the chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Malaysian Embassy in Ukraine, Fadhilah Daud, and assisted by second secretary Aminuddin Osman, travelled from Kyiv by road since Friday afternoon and arrived in Poland at 5.45am Sunday (10.45pm Saturday local time).

Responding to allegations from some parties regarding the implementation of the mission, Wisma Putra explained that sensitive information, such as the

evacuation plan, had not been disclosed to the public in order to ensure the safety of all parties involved.

"This approach is important to ensure the implementation of the mission runs smoothly according to the set plan," it said.

According to Wisma Putra, the embassy in Kyiv – like other Malaysian missions – has an evacuation plan that is ready to be activated if necessary, and constantly updated based on the situation in the field and current needs, including the best options for its implementation.

"The decision to implement the evacuation mission was made based on the latest report from the relevant Malaysian embassy," it said.

Wisma Putra added that the ministry was constantly monitoring the developments in Ukraine and was in close contact with the Malaysian Embassy in Kyiv up to the stage of direct communication by Foreign Minister Saifuddin Abdullah with the embassy's chargé d'affaires.

"Important developments are also raised for the information and attention of the Prime Minister (Ismail Sabri Yaakob) from time to time," it said.

Apart from that, Wisma Putra said the government also discussed the evacuation plan from Ukraine and its implementation in detail during the cabinet meeting on Feb 16.

"The foreign minister has informed the cabinet of developments in Ukraine, especially regarding the security and welfare of Malaysians there," it said.

Taking into account the deteriorating situation and to ensure the safety and welfare of Malaysians, the prime minister decided on Feb 24 that the evacuation plan be activated immediately.

Allegations baseless

Wisma Putra asserted that allegations such as embassy officials fleeing, the absence of standard operating procedures (SOP) for evacuation and so on as reported by some media and social media were completely baseless.

On the use of four cars in the mission, including two embassy vehicles, Wisma Putra said the decision took into account the number of individuals involved, and to facilitate the movement and maintain safety during the journey.

According to Wisma Putra, the government had previously carried out various

evacuation missions from foreign countries, whether facing conflict or natural disasters, including the repatriation of Malaysians from 99 countries during the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Such missions are carried out by Malaysian diplomatic delegations with the coordination and cooperation of the Foreign Ministry and relevant ministries/agencies in Malaysia," it said.

Meanwhile, Wisma Putra said the operation of the Malaysian Embassy in Kyiv had to be temporarily suspended due to two embassy officials being directly involved in the implementation of the evacuation mission.

It said that so far, only a few foreign embassies have suspended their operations in Kyiv or relocated their operations to other cities in Ukraine.

Wisma Putra also took the opportunity to express its appreciation to all those involved in the success of the evacuation, especially to Fadhilah and Aminuddin, as well as the officials of the Malaysian Embassy in Warsaw.

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday announced a special military operation in the Donbas region, eastern Ukraine. Following that, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy declared a state of emergency throughout the

country.

Ukraine has also announced the closure of its airspace for public use, as it is deemed “high risk” to civil aviation.

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