

12 M'sians in Freedom Flotilla safe
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All 12 Malaysians onboard the Mavi Marmara ship, which came under attack by Israeli forces yesterday, are safe and efforts are now underway to bring them home, Foreign Minister Anifah Aman said.

"We are bringing them back," he told a news conference at the KL International Airport today.

He said that several countries like Jordan and Turkey had expressed willingness to help bring back the Malaysians.

"The Philippines and Ireland, which have missions in Tel Aviv, are also ready to help in getting the Malaysians out of the area either by air or by road," he said.

He said that the Malaysian Embassy in Turkey had officially conveyed to the Turkish government a request for assistance to help bring back the Malaysians who were onboard the Mavi Marmara when Israeli forces stormed the ship yesterday morning.

The Mavi Marmara is one of the ships in the Gaza humanitarian flotilla.

None injured

Anifah also said that the official figure of Malaysians onboard the ship was 12 and not 11 as reported.

He said apart from the 11 names mentioned in media reports, another Malaysian in the group was a member of the Malaysian Islamic Organisation Consultative Council, Mustafa Mansur.

Anifah also confirmed that no Malaysians were injured in the incident.

He also said that Wisma Putra was still determining the locations of all the Malaysians who were being detained by the Israeli Defence Force.

He said that the Mavi Marmara ship had been towed to the Haifa port while five other ships in the peace flotilla were in the Israeli port city of Ashdod.

Constant contact

Anifah said Wisma Putra had set up a round-the-clock operations room to monitor the latest development on the incident.

"We will be in constant contact with our mission in Ankara as well as with countries which have diplomatic ties with Tel Aviv to get the latest information," he said.

The operations room can be contacted at 03-88874570.

Asked on the three ships sponsored by the Perdana Global Peace Organisation (PGPO), Anifah, who had just returned from Singapore to attend the Asean-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) foreign ministers' meeting, said he was told that the mission would continue its

voyage to Gaza.

He said that PGPO representatives had also requested that the Asean-GCC demand Israel to remove the blockade and clear the passage for the aid flotilla.

Speedy return

Meanwhile, Astro Awani vice-president and general manager Rozina Aziz said the news channel received the confirmation that the Malaysians, including their news crew, were safe and uninjured.

"We are very pleased to learn about this latest development involving our reporter-anchor Ashwad Ismail and cameraman Samsulkamal Abdul Latip," she said in a statement.

Efforts to contact the two since the attack at about 10.30am Malaysian time on Monday had been unsuccessful.

She said Astro Awani had been liaising closely with Wisma Putra and Lifeline4Gaza organisers to monitor the developments of the incident.

"Now that we know they are safe, we will work closely with Wisma Putra to ensure their safe and speedy return to Malaysia."

Rozina also said that they had been keeping in touch with immediate family members of Ashwad and Samsulkamal.

"They have been informed of this latest development."

- Bernama

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