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# PM: Bodies will be home soon

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## Arrangements made possible after agreement with rebel leader

**PUTRAJAYA:** The remains of Malaysian citizens on board the MAS Flight MH17 will arrive home soon.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said this was made possible following an agreement reached between Malaysia and Alexander Borodai, who is in command of the region where the ill-fated flight was shot down.

Najib said he had spoken to Borodai late yesterday where it was agreed that the remains of 282 victims, currently in Torez, would be moved by train to Kharkiv 305km away to be handed over to representatives from the Netherlands.

AFP quoted witnesses saying they saw the train leaving Torez

late yesterday.

The remains will then be flown to Amsterdam on board a Dutch C130 Hercules, accompanied by a six-man Malaysian recovery team.

"Following any necessary forensic work, the remains of Malaysian citizens will then be flown home," he said. Reports by *SkyNews* said bodies could be back in Malaysia in about 24 hours.

Addressing Malaysians in a live telecast early today, Najib said it was also agreed that at about 2am, the two black boxes were handed over to a Malaysian team in Donetsk.

He said after discussions with Borodai, it was agreed that the independent international investigators would be guaranteed safe access to

the crash site.

"I must stress that although an agreement has been reached, there remains a number of steps required before it is completed.

"There is work which relies on continued communication in good faith. Mr Borodai and his people have so far given their cooperation.

"I ask that all parties continue to work together to ensure that the remains of our people are returned, that the black boxes are handed over, and that the international team is granted full access to the site."

Najib said only then could the investigations into MH17 truly begin, and only then could the victims be afforded the respect

they deserve.

"In recent days, there were times I wanted to give greater voice to the anger and grief that the Malaysian people feel, and that I feel. But sometimes, we must work quietly for a better outcome.

The prime minister said he understood that for the families, nothing could undo this damage.

"The lives taken cannot be given back; the dignity lost cannot be regained.

"My heart reaches out to those whose loved ones were lost on MH17.

"We hope and pray that the agreement reached tonight helps bring them a clear step towards closure," he said.