

Newspaper	The Star
Date	12 July 2015

PM recalls hard decisions made *The Star* after tragedy *- 12/7/2015*

SEPANG: Recounting the dark days following the downing of MH17, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said he was forced to make hard decisions to recover the victims' bodies and the black box.

The Prime Minister said he had to take the unprecedented step of negotiating with rebels in eastern Ukraine.

"The situation was precarious, the plane was shot down in an area full of separatists. They were in possession of the wreckage, the bodies and the black box," he said at the MH17 memorial ceremony at the Bunga Raya Complex in KL International Airport here yesterday.

Najib said for nights he could not sleep but in the end, negotiations with rebel leader Andrei Kartapolov were worth it.

"I did not do it out of disrespect for the Ukraine government but it was for the sole intention of recovering the bodies and the black box," he said.

Najib said he always had the victims' grieving families in mind.

"For my wife and me, this incident is a difficult one to forget because a family member of mine was also involved in the tragedy," he said.

Najib's step-grandmother Puan Sri Siti Amirah Parawira, 83, was among those who perished.

He also paid tribute to various agencies involved in the recovery efforts and thanked Transport Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai and Defence Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein for managing the crisis.