

## **'Gov't must apologise over MH370 tragedy'**

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**Oleh Leven Woon**

KUALA LUMPUR: PAS lawmaker Khalid Samad today pressured the government to issue a formal apology to the families and relatives of the Chinese passengers aboard the missing flight MH370.

The call was made after angry Chinese nationals staged a protest outside the Malaysian embassy in Beijing yesterday.

He said the government should own up to its mistake as it was negligent and failed to launch search and rescue operations immediately after the plane disappeared from civil radar at about 1.21am on March 8.

“The government should own up its mistake and apologise to the Chinese.

“If China could apologise to us over the two wrong satellite images, why can't we do the same?” the Shah Alam MP asked during a press conference at the Parliament's lobby today.

He said as the Department of Civil Aviation failed to inform the relevant authorities about the missing plane promptly, the Royal Malaysian Air Force (TUDM) was not on full alert when its military radar detected a plane flying above the Straits Of Malacca.

“TUDM might have thought that it is just another case of commercial airline entering into our airspace, which happened regularly,” he said, referring to TUDM's previous statement that its military radar had picked up signal of an unidentified plane on March 8.

He said by the time Malaysia announced that the plane went missing at 5am, the search ratio had to be expanded indefinitely.

In comparison, Khalid said the Egypt authorities began its search efforts minutes after a commercial jet (Egypt Air flight 990) went missing in 1999,

Yesterday, emotional relatives of the Chinese passengers marched to the Malaysia embassy after Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak announced that the missing plane ended its flight in South Indian Ocean.

They accused the Malaysian government for hiding the truth and called Malaysia Airlines, the government and military as “executioners” and “killers”.

Khalid also stressed that there was no need for the government to purchase a new set of radar system because there was no equipment failure in the case of locating MH370.

He said rather, responsibility should be on individuals who failed to act.

“Even if we upgrade all the radars, if they still do not act, the same thing will happen again,” he said.

There were 154 Chinese nationals on the ill-fated flight.

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