

'Where are our submarines?'

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PETALING JAYA: Blogger and DAP parliamentarian Mohd Ariff Sabri Abdul Aziz today slammed the government for not mobilising its submarines in the MH370 search and rescue (SAR) operation.

Mohd Ariff, who blogs as Sakmongkol, said unlike Singapore, the Malaysian government didn't use the submarines in the operation although billions have been spent to purchase them.

"We did not send our submarine rescue ship either (SRS) – the one built by a company known as Target Resources Sdn Bhd. We are paying RM6 million a month to Target Resource's to be on standby. How come we did not send the SRS? Singapore did," he said in blog posting titled 'Making sense of our defence spending'.

"The fact that we did not, suggests that our own SRS hasn't got all the specs with full underwater search capabilities.

"Do we have a remote operated vehicle that comes along with our SRS? Do we have trained divers on the ships- the ones using suits like astronauts? If we don't have these, then what did we spend on," asked Mohd Ariff who is also DAP's Raub MP.

He questioned why the government has yet to utilise its submarines even though the SAR operation has been moved to the Indian Ocean.

"But since the plane ended into the Indian Ocean- where the ocean is deep enough- isn't it time to mobilise our submarines?

"UK has sent its submarine to search for the plane. We must now send ours because the primary responsibility to muster a credible number of credible assets lies with us. The plane is ours and we have Malaysians on that plane," he added.

He also took a swipe at Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak and Acting Transport Minister Hishammuddin Hussein for making contradicting statements.

"Now our Captain Kirk PM (Najib) says, using calculations never done before, it is without doubt we conclude that MH370 ended in the Indian Ocean. Ended means what? It crashed into the Indian Ocean? It stayed suspended in the netherworld as suggested by the Umno VVIP bomoh?

"Despite saying that, Hishammuddin can come along to say the PM did not say the plane crashed into the Indian Ocean.

"Even till now, he is still muddling. Yet there are people who say Hisham has done well. Done well measured by which standard? By the standard of school dropouts?

“Then why all the sombre mood? Then why the entire sorrowful rendition? Ended there means what it’s supposed to mean – the plane crashed into the Indian Ocean and there were no survivors,” he stressed.

Hishammuddin, who is also the Defence Minister, had previously said that the two Malaysian submarines were fitted for combat and could not perform a search and rescue role.

Malaysia’s two French-made Scorpène class submarines – Tunku Abdul Rahman and Tun Abdul Razak – commissioned in 2009, have been mired in controversy over its capabilities as well as costs.

Detractors have claimed that the Malaysian Ministry of Defence – under Najib’s watch then – had paid a high amount of RM4 billion for the submarines which were bought through cronies who also took a hefty commission.

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