

Perth's Malay Community Hopes For Swift Closure To MH370 Episode

Bernama

12 Apr, 2014

From Mohd Razman Abdullah & Nik Nurfaqih Nik Wil

PERTH, April 12 (Bernama) -- Like so many communities touched by the disappearance of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370, the 20,000-strong Malay community in Perth harbours hopes that the missing plane will be found soon, bringing closure to the families of the passengers and crew on board.

They said the families should draw strength from support by people all across the globe, and the fact that underwater 'ping' signals consistent with black box locator beacons had been detected in the search area located in the northwest of Perth, in the southern Indian Ocean.

"We pray that the searchers will find the aircraft soon as the search has been going on for 36 days now," Johor Baharu-born information technology consultant Hashim Mohamad, 51, told Bernama.

A Perth resident for the past 36 years, the father of two said he felt the anguish and frustration of the families over the ongoing multinational search in waters off Perth for the Boeing 777-200 plane missing since early last month.

Flight MH370 with 239 people on board disappeared from civilian radar screens while over the South China Sea, about an hour after departing from the KL International Airport at 12.41am on March 8. It was to have arrived in Beijing at 6.30am on the same day.

For Makan Makan restaurant owner, Ahmad Norly Hassan, 48, the long wait for answers must be unbearable for the families.

"It must feel like eternity for them. I hope the promising findings (of signals) as reported by the media could be a source of hope for them," said Ahmad Norly who opened his restaurant after graduating in finance from the University of Western Australia in 2000.

The Terengganu-born business owner said he sometimes organised Yasin recitals and prayers for a successful conclusion to the search for MH370.

"We've even put up a white board at the restaurant for customers to express their support and hopes towards finding MH370," he said.

Malay Association of Western Australia president Rahmah Aziz, 60, said while prayers and hope went to the families, the search teams for MH370 were the unsung heroes in this sad episode.

"We owe them a debt of gratitude for doing this hazardous and painstaking task," said Rahmah who has been living in Australia for 40 years.

Originally from Singapore, she noted that it was her late husband who had established the association back in 1984 to preserve Malay culture and unite the community in Perth.

A multinational search was mounted following MH370's disappearance, first in the South China Sea

before being expanded to the Melaka Strait, Andaman Sea and now in the southern Indian Ocean.

Analysis of satellite data later indicated that the aircraft flew along what is called the 'southern corridor', and that its last position was in the middle of the Indian Ocean, west of Perth.

Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak then announced on March 24, seventeen days after the disappearance of the aircraft, that Flight MH370 "ended in the southern Indian Ocean".

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