

## **Malaysia Working With Philippines To Locate Sabah Kidnap Victims - Najib**

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**By Mohd Razman Abdullah**

PERTH, April 3 (Bernama) -- Malaysia has contacted Philippine authorities over efforts to locate a Chinese tourist and a Filipino resort worker abducted by a group of men in Sabah Wednesday night, Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said here Thursday.

He said he regarded the abduction as serious and had ordered all the relevant enforcement agencies to look into the case immediately.

"Our priority is to ensure the safety of the hostages," Najib told Malaysian journalists shortly after a joint press conference with Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott on the search for a missing Malaysian airliner in the southern Indian Ocean.

Eastern Sabah Security Command (EssCom) director-general Datuk Mohammad Mentek said Thursday a Chinese tourist and a Filipino resort worker were abducted by a group of men from Pulau Singahmata near Pulau Bum-Bum in Semporna, Sabah, Wednesday night.

Najib did not rule out the probability that some quarters wanted to tarnish the relations between Malaysia and China as the abduction coincided with the missing Malaysia Airlines (MAS) Flight MH370.

Some 153 of the 227 passengers on the Boeing 777-200ER aircraft, which disappeared on March 8 when flying from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing, were Chinese nationals.

Najib arrived here Wednesday on a two-day working visit to Australia to have a first-hand look at the search being conducted out of this western Australian city for a missing Malaysian airliner believed to have gone down in the southern Indian Ocean.

The prime minister said all efforts to find the abduction victims were ongoing and that identification of those involved in the incident might require some time.

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