

Aussie PM Backs Najib's View MH370 Lost In Indian Ocean
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KUALA LUMPUR, March 31 (Bernama) -- Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott has backed his Malaysian counterpart's view that Malaysia Airlines (MAS) MH370 aircraft's final flight path ended in the remote Indian Ocean.

"The accumulation of evidence is that the aircraft has been lost and it has been lost somewhere in the south of the Indian Ocean," he told reporters at the Perth military base coordinating the search, on Monday reported news agency, AFP.

"That's the absolutely overwhelming wave of evidence and I think that Prime Minister (Datuk Seri) Najib (Tun) Razak was perfectly entitled to come to that conclusion, and I think once that conclusion had been arrived at, it was his duty to make that conclusion public," Abbott was quoted by the news agency.

The Malaysian Boeing 777-200ER, with 239 passengers and crew on board, vanished on March 8, about an hour after the Kuala Lumpur-Beijing flight took off from the KL International Airport at 12.41am.

On March 24, Najib had announced that (the flight path of) Flight MH370 ended in a remote region of the southern Indian Ocean based on detailed analyses of satellite data.

The announcement had sparked frustration among many relatives of those on board the missing aircraft, urging the authorities to arrive at concrete evidence in its findings.

Meanwhile at the same press conference, news agency, Reuters quoted Abbott as saying that Australia had put no time limit to search for the Malaysian jetliner.

"I'm certainly not putting a time limit on it," said Abbott, adding that "the intensity of our search and the magnitude of operations is increasing, not decreasing."

The news agency reported a total of 20 aircraft and ships would scour the remote seas off the Australian southwest coast on Monday for MH370.

In a related matter, Abbott has acknowledged the Royal Malaysian Air Force's (RMAF) tireless efforts as "extraordinary" in the search for MH370.

"I want to acknowledge the extraordinary work of the Malaysian air force because it is not just here right now, but it has been in the air searching for three weeks now," he told a press conference during his visit to the Pearce RAAF (Royal Australian Air Force) base in Perth on Monday.

He said for the past three weeks, RMAF had been involved in the multinational search and rescue operations, first in the South China Sea and then over a large tract of land and sea west of Malaysia, including the Indian Ocean, when it was learned the plane had veered off, far from its original course.

The search mission shifted to the southern Indian Ocean after Najib's announcement that the aircraft's flight path ended in a remote region of the Indian Ocean.

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