

MH370: Families Can Meet PM, Hishammuddin in Near Future - Jailani

Bernama

June 9, 2014

KUALA LUMPUR, June 9 (Bernama) -- The request by families of the passengers of missing Malaysia Airlines (MAS) Flight MH370 to meet Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and Acting Transport Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein will be fulfilled in the near future, said Communication and Multimedia Deputy Minister Datuk Jailani Johari.

He said the meeting will be arranged in due time and Malaysia is looking forward to establish a working template in dealing with issues raised by next-of-kin of the passengers of the ill-fated plane.

"We will continue our direct engagement efforts with the next-of-kin primarily in Malaysia and China. We would also like to praise the Chinese government's efforts in handling the issues related to the families.

"We give our full assurance to the next-of-kin, wherever they may be, that we remain fully committed in our search for their loved ones," he told a press briefing on the search and rescue (SAR) mission here, today.

Jailani noted that Deputy Foreign Minister Datuk Hamzah Zainuddin, who leads the committee to liaise with the next-of-kin, will be heading to Beijing in due time to update the Chinese counterparts on the latest efforts at the tripartite level and Malaysia's contribution.

"We would also be discussing with the Chinese leadership on their views and future plans with regards to the MH370 search operation, ranging from issues related to the families, asset deployment and technical expertise.

"This team has the mandate from the Malaysian Prime Minister to fully engage with the Chinese government," he said, adding that this was the follow up to the recent discussion by the prime ministers from both countries to remain committed in the search mission.

The plane with 239 passengers and crew went missing on March 8 while en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing.

Despite a massive multinational search in the South China Sea and the southern Indian Ocean (the plane is believed to have made an air turn back), the missing aircraft is yet to be found.

Meanwhile on the four sub committees' trip to Canberra, Australia, tomorrow, Department of Civil Aviation Director General Datuk Azharuddin Abdul Rahman said the objective of the trip among others is to get more information on the completed re-analysis of the raw data and the results of the bathymetric survey analysis.

The four sub committees comprise of the Asset Deployment committee, Technical and Logistics committee, Next-of-Kin committee, and the Liaison, Communication and Media committee.

"Experts in Australia, comprising Australian and Malaysian teams in Canberra, have done their analysis and they are now in the process of exchanging notes with Inmarsat," he said.

He, however, said that the outcome of the discussions between the team of experts and Inmarsat cannot be revealed until more details of the progress was obtained.

"On the bathymetric survey, so far the analysis of the survey is being done by Geoscience Australia. Again, this is another objective of us going to Canberra and we should be able to know the results of this initial bathymetric survey," he added.

Meanwhile, Head of the Asset Committee, Datuk Rahim Bakri, said Petronas and DRB-HICOM Defence Technologies Sdn Bhd (DEFTECH) had already formed a partnership and they were offering certain assets to be deployed in the search area soon.

"On the cost involved (search operation), after finalising it in the next few months, the cost can be determined and will be shared 50-50 by Malaysia and Australia," he said.

He also added that the Joint Action Coordination Centre (JACC) based in Australia will tender out the services to interested companies but the number of participants had yet to be known so far.

On the the crowd funding initiative by the families to raise US\$5 million (RM16.1 million) to reward whistleblowers for information regarding the plane's location, Azharuddin said they came to know about this through the newspapers and welcomed the initiative.

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