

Prime Minister's Statement On MH17 Tragedy
Bernama
July 19, 2014

KUALA LUMPUR, July 19 (Bernama) -- Following is Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak's statement at the press conference on the Malaysia Airlines (MAS) flight MH17 tragedy at Seri Perdana in Putrajaya early this morning:

"In recent days, we have been working behind the scenes to establish contact with those in charge of the MH17 crash site.

That contact has now been made. Under difficult and fluid circumstances, we have been discussing the problems that have occupied us all: securing vital evidence from the aircraft, launching an independent investigation and, above all, recovering the remains of those who lost their lives.

Tonight, we have established the basis of an agreement to do just that.

Earlier this evening I spoke to Alexander Borodai, who is in command of the region where the tragedy occurred. We have agreed to the following:

Firstly, the remains of 282 people, currently in Torez, will be moved by train to Kharkiv, where they will be handed over to representatives from the Netherlands.

The train will depart this evening Ukraine time and will be accompanied by six Malaysian members of the recovery team. The remains will then be flown to Amsterdam on board a Dutch C130 Hercules, together with the Malaysian team. Following any necessary forensic work, the remains of Malaysian citizens will then be flown home to Malaysia.

Secondly, at approximately 9pm tonight Ukraine time, the two black boxes will be handed over to a Malaysian team in Donetsk, who will take custody of them.

Thirdly, independent international investigators will be guaranteed safe access to the crash site to begin a full investigation of the incident.

I must stress that although agreement has been reached, there remains a number of steps required before it is completed.

There is work still to be done, work which relies on continued communication in good faith. Mr Borodai and his people have so far given their co-operation.

I ask that all parties continue to work together to ensure that this agreement is honoured; that the remains of our people are returned, that the black box is handed over, and that the international team is granted full access to the site.

Only then can the investigation into MH17 truly begin; only then can the victims be afforded the respect they deserve. We need to know what caused the plane to crash and who was responsible for it so that justice may be done.

In recent days, there were times I wanted to give greater voice to the anger and grief that the Malaysian people feel. And that I feel. But sometimes, we must work quietly in the service of a better outcome.

I understand that for the families, nothing can undo this damage. The lives taken cannot be given back; the dignity lost cannot be regained.

My heart reaches out to those whose loved ones were lost on MH17. We hope and pray that the agreement reached tonight helps bring them a clear step towards closure.

-- BERNAMA

Copyright © 2014 BERNAMA

Source: <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v7/newsindex.php?id=1055330>