

**MH370 Case Declared Accident Based On ICAO Definitions- Liow
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KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 30 (Bernama) -- The official declaration that the case of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 was an accident was made based on definitions set by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), said Transport Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai.

According to him, the fact that the Boeing 777 aircraft did not land on any airport after departing and did not reach its intended destination and that the search mission for the aircraft failed to achieve its objective were among the factors the incident was deemed as an accident.

"With that, what happened to MH370 could be stated as an accident according to ICAO definitions.

"We did not arrive at the word (accident) according to our whims and fancy," he said in a special interview aired over RTM1 tonight.

Liow stressed that the government was cautious in using the word 'accident' or 'incident' in which case what happened to MH370 was deemed as an accident.

Yesterday, Department of Civil Aviation (DCA) director-general Datuk Azharuddin Abdul Rahman in a special announcement, declared the disappearance of Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 as an accident and that all of its 239 passengers and crew members were presumed dead.

The plane which was heading to Beijing vanished from air-traffic radars after departing from the Kuala Lumpur International Airport on March 8 2014. Liow said the search mission to find the missing plane would be continued to find the cause of the accident.

He said finding out the real cause of the accident would help in enhancing the capabilities of radar systems and of black boxes in commercial aircraft. Besides that, Liow drew attention to the fact that the declaration was made taking into account the interest of the next-of-kin of the missing flight's victims.

"We did not do anything to (deliberately) hurt them. It is not true that we did not contact or discuss with the NOK (next-of-kin)," he said.

Touching on compensation to the families of the victims, he said Malaysia Airlines (MAS) must follow all the relevant laws.

However, he said although compensation was being offered, it was up to the families to make a decision on it.

"We cannot force them to accept the compensation offered," he said, adding that the matter of compensation could be discussed with MAS.

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