

**MT Orkim Harmony: Malaysia To Request Extradition Of Suspected Hijackers**  
**Bernama**  
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BAGAN DATOH, June 20 (Bernama) -- Malaysia will request for the extradition of the seven suspected hijackers of MT Orkim Harmony for prosecution in the country, Home Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said today.

He said the request for the extradition of the suspects would be submitted to Vietnam and Indonesia, the latest by this Tuesday.

"The Royal Malaysia Police (PDRM) will conduct further investigation following a preliminary investigation by the Vietnamese authorities.

"We thank the governments of Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand for the cooperation extended to the Malaysian authorities," he told reporters after performing the Tarawih prayer at the Al-Khairiah Mosque, Selekoh here, last night.

He did not rule out the possibility of an inside man involved in hijacking the Malaysian vessel.

However, he said, thorough investigation would have to be conducted before any action could be taken.

MT Orkim Harmony, laden with 6,000 metric tonnes of petrol, worth RM21 million, was reported missing at 8.57 pm last Thursday while on its way to Kuantan Port in Pahang from Melaka.

The vessel, owned by Magna Meridian Sdn. Bhd, was carrying 22 crew, comprising 16 Malaysians, five Indonesians and a Myanmar national.

Following which an operation was carried out to track down the tanker. A P3C Orion belonging to the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) located the tanker at 210 nautical miles off Redang Island at 3.45 pm on June 17.

The missing MT Orkim Harmony was found safe, with its name changed to 'Kim Harmon' and its chimney painted black.

The Malaysian Navy then took over the search and rescue (SAR) operation and contacted the hijackers via radio, instructing them to release the 22 crew members.

The Navy also confirmed that there were eight hijackers armed with pistols and parangs on the tanker and it was holding talks with the hijackers to release the crew and to surrender.

The 22 crew were released at about 2.30 am yesterday.

However, one of them, Indonesian Mavit Matin, 46, who is a cook, was injured from a gun shot wound in the thigh, and was flown by helicopter to Universiti Sains Malaysia Hospital (HUSM) for treatment.

Meanwhile, the Vietnamese authorities detained eight Indonesian nationals, suspected to be the hijackers of the oil tanker, near Tho Chu Island, south Vietnam at about 6.30 am today.

Meanwhile in KUALA LUMPUR, the Malaysian maritime Enforcement Agency (APMM) confirmed that the six suspects detained by the Vietnamese authorities were pirates who had hijacked MT Orkim Harmony.

Its deputy director-general of operations, Datuk Ahmad Puzi Ab Kahar said the information was conveyed to MMEA by the Vietnamese authority.

"MMEA is now negotiating with Vietnam to bring them to Malaysia for further action," he said when contacted by Bernama.

Meanwhile, Chief of Navy Admiral Tan Sri Abdul Aziz Jaafar said photographs of the eight suspects were shown to the injured cook and he confirmed they were the people who hijacked the vessel.

"Now, we (RMN) are handing it to MMEA for any latest development on the vessel," he added.

In KOTA BAHARU, Kelantan MMEA enforcement chief (District 10) Captain Nurul Hizam Zakaria said they have recorded statements from the cook, currently warded at Universiti Sains Malaysia Hospital (HUSM) in Kubang Kerian.

"We recorded the cook's statements to facilitate our investigation,, which is still in the early stage," he told reporters.

Nurul Hizam said MMEA personnel were stationed at the hospital to ensure the cook's safety.

Members of the media are not allowed to interview the victim.

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