

**Ranau Quake: Brave Mountain Guides Will Be Honoured – PM
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KUNDASANG, June 9 (Bernama) -- The government will confer awards to the mountain guides who showed outstanding bravery and sacrificed their own safety in rescuing victims trapped on Mount Kinabalu in the Ranau earthquake disaster on Friday, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

Najib said he had discussed the matter with Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Aman and that the state government would come up with the list of the mountain guides deserving the awards.

"We will be doing due diligence on how best we can recognise these mountain guides for their bravery and sacrifices above and beyond the call of duty," he said.

Najib was speaking at a ceremony to hand over aid to Sabah victims of the earthquake and families who lost their loved ones in the disaster at Taman Kinabalu here today.

At the event, Najib also witnessed the handing over a cheque for RM1 million from the Sarawak government to the Sabah government for its earthquake disaster fund. Sarawak Minister of Resource Planning and Environment Minister II Datuk Amar Awang Tengah Ali Hasan handed over the cheque to Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Aman.

Four mountain guides were killed in the disaster which has left 16 people dead, including foreign tourists. They are Sabahans Ricky Masirin, 28, Valerian Joannes, 27, and Robbi Sapinggi, 31, and Muhammad Daanish Amran, 22, from Singapore.

Ronny Masirin, 35, Ricky's brother, said the family was grateful for the aid contributed by the federal government.

"It shows the caring nature of the federal government. Although it (aid) cannot erase our sadness, at least it will help lighten the burden of our family," he said when met after the ceremony.

Valerian's cousin Victorious Benjamin, 41, said the aid would in some way help his (Valerian's) family.

He added that the government's move to confer awards to the mountain guides who sacrificed their safety and even lives to rescue climbers on Mount Kinabalu was most welcome.

The earthquake with its epicentre in Ranau, Sabah struck at 7.15 am. Mt Kinabalu at 4,101 metres is the highest mountain in Southeast Asia.

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