

**MH17 Tragedy Still Fresh In PM's Mind**  
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SEPANG, July 11 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak today said no words could describe the sorrow and pain suffered by families and friends of victims of Malaysia Airlines (MAS) MH17.

Although the tragedy happened almost one year ago, the grief remained and is also felt by Malaysians including the Prime Minister.

In the incident on July 17, 2014, Najib also lost his step grandmother Puan Sri Siti Amirah Prawira Kasuma, who was among the 298 passengers and crew.

"Nothing can replace the loss of our loved ones, only beautiful memories are left and will stay in our hearts forever.

"And we will not forget them in our prayers," he said during a memorial to mark the first anniversary of the tragedy at Bunga Raya Complex, KLIA here.

MH17 was en route from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur when it was shot down in Ukraine.

Najib described the tragedy as an incident that would not be easily forgotten.

He said he wanted to meet the victims' families individually because he wanted them to know that he felt their grief.

"I wanted to do whatever was needed to find those responsible. I couldn't allow families to grieve without having the bodies of their love ones returned to them.

"And that was when I initiated to investigate and manage to negotiate with the separatists," he said.

Najib also shared with the victims' next of kin and those present, his experience while negotiating day and night with the separatists to release the remains of the victims and the black box.

"I had a very difficult negotiation and conversation with the separatists. It is unprecedented in Malaysia's history to negotiate with separatists.

"It was not done to disrespect Ukraine, my sole intention was to recover the remains of the victims and wreckage. Alhamdulillah, we managed to recover the bodies and the wreckage," he said.

Najib also expressed his appreciation to the forensic team, Ministry of Health, police, Armed Forces, Department of Islamic Development Malaysia, Department of Civil Aviation

"for doing a wonderful job" in the effort to recover bodies and wreckage from the site.

He also thanked his counterpart, the Prime Minister of Netherlands, Mark Rutte, for assisting Malaysia in bringing back the remains.

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