

Australia looks to China for help as MH370 search funds run low

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Australia is asking China to become more involved in the search for Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 as funding for search operations begins to run low.

Quoting Australian Deputy Transport Minister Warren Truss, the International Business Times said there were sufficient funds from Malaysia and Australia to continue search efforts until April or May 2016.

According to reports, though, China which lost more than 100 citizens when MH370 disappeared, has not provided any funding for search operations.

"[China has] been talking about the prospect of providing ships and search equipment, and whatever contribution they could make would obviously be welcome," Truss was quoted as saying.

"But it does need to be shipping and equipment that's compatible with existing operations, and they don't have that equipment available so they're working on ways they might be able to make a contribution."

Flight MH370 vanished from radar on March 8, 2014, en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing. The Boeing 777 was carrying 227 passengers and 12 crew members, all of whom are presumed dead after an official declaration from the government on January 29, classifying the incident as an accident based on international aviation rules.

Of the 227 passengers, 152 were Chinese citizens.

Last month, Department of Civil Aviation (DCA) director-general Datuk Azharuddin Abdul Rahman said Malaysia, China and Australia remained committed to finding the aircraft which experts say most likely crashed in the Southern Indian Ocean.

This followed the discovery of a part of the plane known as a flaperon on the French island of Reunion.

The find, after more than a year of searching, sparked hopes that the rest of the aircraft would soon be located. However, there has been no further trace of debris despite the most expensive search operation in aviation history.

Earlier this year, reports said Malaysia and Australia were expected to share the A\$50 million (RM141 million) cost of extending the search for MH370 if the plane was not found in the first 60,000 sq km search zone in the Indian Ocean.

At least US\$44 million (RM143.55 million) was spent on the deployment of military ships and aircraft in the Indian Ocean and South China Sea in the first month of the search, about the same as was spent on the whole underwater search for Air France's

flight AF447, which crashed into the Mid-Atlantic in 2009.

Family members of those on board MH370 remain hopeful that the plane will be found although aviation expert Bruce Robertson recently warned that this was unlikely. – October 30, 2015.

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