

RM280.5 Mln Spent In Search for Missing MH370 Aircraft

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KUALA LUMPUR, March 28 (Bernama) -- The government had spent about RM280.5 million in the search for the missing Malaysia Airlines MH370 plane as of February 2016, according to the Transport Ministry.

The ministry, in a written reply to the Dewan Rakyat, said the search for the aircraft was carried out in an area measuring 86,752 sq kilometres.

It was replying to a question from Datuk Liang Teck Meng (BN-Simpang Renggam) on the status of the search for MH370 as well as the amount spent in the search for the ill-fated plane.

The MAS aircraft was reported missing while on a flight to Beijing from Kuala Lumpur on March 8, 2014, carrying 239 passengers and crew.

The plane was later announced as having ended its journey in the Indian Ocean after having veered off course. The search is expected to cover 120,000 sq kilometres by June.

Replying to a question from Liang on investigations on the MH17 incident, the ministry said criminal investigations was still being conducted by the Joint Investigating Team (JIT) led by the Netherlands with members from Australia, Belgium, Malaysia as well as Ukraine.

"Investigations are expected to continue until mid-2016. The efforts to identify the party responsible for the MH17 tragedy depended on the results of the investigations," the ministry said.

Liang wanted to know if there were signs of the mastermind who shot down the aircraft as well as the latest efforts of the government to take action on the incident.

The ministry said Malaysia, with other countries in JIT, would continue to discuss two prosecution options, one at national level by one of the countries in JIT and prosecution by an international tribunal specially set up by JIT countries.

"For both options, the results of the criminal investigations have to be acquired first to establish the place of residence of suspects, nationality and the best location for them to be tried.

The ministry said any prosecution options and trials would be subject to sufficient evidence against the accused which can be accepted by the court.

The Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur was shot down in eastern Ukraine on July 17, 2014, killing all 298 passengers and crew on board.

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