

**NZ assisting those affected by Christchurch terror attack - High Commissioner-designate**

**BERNAMA**

**18/03/2019**

**By Samantha Tan**

KUALA LUMPUR, March 18 (Bernama) -- The New Zealand government and its people are doing everything possible to heal, support, console and reassure all those affected by the terror attack at two mosques in Christchurch last Friday, said New Zealand's High Commissioner-designate to Malaysia, Hunter Nottage.

“Our focus is compassion and support to those impacted by this tragedy,” he told Bernama International News Service in a phone interview here, Sunday.

On March 15, New Zealand suffered an unprecedented terrorist attack when mass shooting happened at two mosques, namely the Al Noor and Linwood, in Christchurch during the Friday prayers.

So far, 50 people died in the terrorist incident while over 40 people were injured.

The New Zealand High Commission in Kuala Lumpur also expressed their sympathy to all those affected by the attacks.

“Our thoughts are very much with the Malaysian victims, with their families and communities. Malaysia and New Zealand share a long history of friendship and people-to-people connections. Many of you will be worried and have questions,” he said.

Nottage said his government was very grateful for the sympathy and support expressed by Yang di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah, Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, the Malaysian Government and many friends here in Malaysia.

"The safety and support of Malaysians affected is of paramount importance to New Zealand and our agencies. Family members concerned on the whereabouts of their loved ones can contact the New Zealand police contact number 0800 115 019 (within New Zealand) or +64 3 353 4532 (from outside New Zealand)," he added.

In addition, Nottage said officials from the High Commission of Malaysia in Wellington are currently in Christchurch, joined by Deputy Secretary General (Multilateral Affairs) of the Malaysian Foreign Ministry Datuk Nadzirah Osman, to provide support to victims and their families.

Malaysia's Foreign Minister Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah confirmed that three Malaysians were reported injured in the incident and one still missing.

The injured Malaysians are Mohd Tarmizi Shuib, 46, from Kedah; Rahimi Ahmad, 39, from Penang; and Mohd Nazril Hisham Omar, 46, from Kelantan; while the missing is Mohd Haziq Mohd Shuib, 17.

Nottage also advised Malaysians to constantly check on any travel advisory by Malaysia's Foreign Ministry for those planning to travel to New Zealand.

"Our understanding is that travel advisory at this point has not changed dramatically but you need to keep checking it because it is the situation of violence. However, what we have seen, from the New Zealand police and their website providing constant updates, are that the risk occurred very shortly after the incident.

"There will be an increased police presence on the ground in particular, but not limited to the mosques in New Zealand. And that will occur and keep going on for as long as necessary. At this point, safety is paramount, and that is the key focus of New Zealand and its agencies," he stressed.

Nottage said the New Zealand authorities have acted swiftly in response to this abhorrent act and police have made arrests, with one person charged in court on Saturday (March 16).

It was reported that Australian-born 28-year-old Brenton Tarrant was charged with murder on Saturday. He was remanded without a plea and is due back in court on April 5 where police said he was likely to face further charges.

“This extreme violence is unprecedented in our history. It does not represent who we are as a country and we utterly condemn those responsible,” Nottage said.

New Zealand’s Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern who had condemned this senseless act of violence against innocent people had described the day as one of New Zealand’s “darkest days”.

“This act of terror goes against the core of what New Zealand stands for. We represent diversity, kindness, compassion. Those values will not and cannot be shaken by this attack. We have a well-earned reputation of being a safe, welcoming and peaceful nation that is home to over 200 ethnicities. We will not allow this unprecedented act of terror to change that,” Nottage stressed.

-- BERNAMA

© 2018 BERNAMA. All Rights Reserved. Disclaimer | Privacy Policy| Security Policy  
Source: <http://www.bernama.com/en/news.php?id=1706255>