

PRESS CONFERENCE : MH 370

17 MARCH 2014, MONDAY, 5.30 PM

SPOKEPERSON

DATUK SERI HISHAMMUDDIN TUN HUSSEIN (ACTING MINISTER OF TRANSPORT)

ATTENDING BY :

DATO' HAMZAH ZAINUDDIN (DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER)

DATO' AZHARUDDIN ABDUL RAHMAN (DG DCA)

AHMAD JAUHARI YAHYA (CEO MAS)

Diplomatic efforts

During the last 24 hours, the Prime Minister has spoken to the Prime Minister of Australia and the Premier of China. Malaysia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has sent diplomatic notes to all countries involved in the search and rescue operation.

This includes two groups: first, countries in the search corridors; and second, countries from which we are seeking assistance and expertise.

For countries in the search corridors, we are requesting radar and satellite information, as well as specific assets for the search and rescue operation. We are asking them to share their land, sea and aerial search and rescue action plans with the Rescue Co-ordination Centre here in Malaysia, so that we can co-ordinate the search effort. We have asked for regular updates, including daily reports on both search activities, and details of any information required from Malaysia.

We are not at liberty to reveal information from specific countries. As the co-ordinating authority we are gathering all information as part of the on-going search and rescue operation.

Search and rescue operations

Over the past 48 hours, Malaysia has been working on the diplomatic, technical and logistical requirements of the search for MH370. The number of countries involved in the search and rescue operation has increased to 26.

Malaysia continues to lead the overall co-ordination of the search effort. The southern corridor has been divided into two sections, according to International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) demarcations.

These demarcations were agreed by the ICAO – of which Malaysia is a council member – before MH370 went missing. Australia and Indonesia have agreed to lead search and rescue operations in their respective regions as demarcated by the ICAO.

Today, I can confirm that search and rescue operations in the northern and southern corridors have already begun.

Countries including Malaysia, Australia, China, Indonesia and Kazakhstan have already initiated search and rescue operations.

The Royal Malaysian Air Force and the Royal Malaysian Navy have deployed assets to the southern corridor. Two Malaysian ships have been deployed: the offshore patrol vessels KD Kelantan and KD Selangor. This deployment also includes a Super Lynx helicopter, which can operate from either ship.

Australia has already moved a P-3 Orion aircraft to region of the Cocos and Christmas Islands. Today, the Prime Minister of Australia confirmed that Australia will send an additional two P-3 Orions and a C-130 Hercules. A US P-8 Poseidon aircraft will be travelling to Perth today to help with the search.

Expert involvement

Malaysia has been working with international investigators and aviation authorities since day one.

Yesterday, experts from Civil Aviation Administration of China joined the investigations team.

Today, officials from the French Office of Investigations and Analysis for the Safety of Civil Aviation also joined the team. These authorities are working with Malaysia Airlines and the DCA to refine data that can help with the search.

Police investigation

On Saturday 8 March, the Royal Malaysia Police started investigations into all crew members on board MH370, including the pilot and co-pilot, as well as all ground staff handling the aircraft.

On Sunday 9 March, police officers visited the homes of the pilot and co-pilot. Officers also spoke to family members of the pilot and co-pilot.

Police visited the homes of the pilot and co-pilot again on Saturday 15 March. The pilot's flight simulator was taken from his house with the assistance of his family. The simulator was re-assembled at police headquarters.

At this point, I would like to stress that Malaysia has been co-operating with the FBI, Interpol and other relevant international law enforcement authorities since day one.

Malaysia's response

I would also like to address the speculation that Malaysia has held back information about MH370's movements.

For the families, I understand that every day prolongs the anguish. I understand because Malaysia, too, is missing its sons and daughters. There were 50 Malaysians on board the plane.

Our priority has always been to find the aircraft. We would not withhold any information that could help. But we also have a responsibility not to release information until it has been verified by the international investigations team.

This responsibility is not only to the families and to the investigation, but also the search and rescue operation. It would be irresponsible to deploy substantial assets merely on the basis of unverified and uncorroborated information.

As soon as the possibility emerged that the plane had carried out an air turn back to the Straits of Malacca, we expanded our search to that area. I would like to reiterate the US investigating team's statement about that decision: based on the information and data given by the Malaysian authorities, the US team was of the view that there were reasonable grounds for the Malaysian authorities to deploy resources to conduct search on the western side of peninsular Malaysia.

As soon as we verified and corroborated the new satellite information as to the possible last known whereabouts of the aircraft, we recalibrated our search efforts to the northern and southern corridors as announced by the Prime Minister. After my statement we will release a more detailed map of the northern and southern corridors.

Malaysia Airlines (MAS)

Malaysia Airlines has set up operations centres in both Kuala Lumpur and Beijing, to care for the families of the crew members and passengers.

MAS has allocated each family a caregiver, who will be on 24hours duty. They have sent more than 100 staff and caregivers to Beijing.

The airline gives daily briefings to the families. They provide counselling sessions. And they contact families, that have elected not to come to Malaysia, between two and three times a day.

Concluding remarks

Over the past two days, we have been recalibrating the search for MH370. It remains a significant diplomatic, technical and logistical challenge. Malaysia is encouraged by the progress made during such a short period of time. We are grateful for the response by the heads of government that we have spoken to, all of whom have expressed a commitment of assistance.

With support from our many international partners, this new phase of the search is underway. Assets are being deployed, and search and rescue operations have begun. I wish to thank our partners from around the world for their continued support.

Q: I got two questions here. First question is, setakat ni berapa buah Negara di kedua-dua koridor pencarian tu yang telah respon kepada nota diplomatic yang kita hantar? Dan satu lagi, hari ini Daily Mail telah menyiarkan footage CCTV di KLIA menunjukkan kedua-dua pilot MAS 370 diperiksa badan mereka sewaktu melepasi garisan keselamatan.

A: Terima kasih. Soalan pertama tadi. Bila kita menghantar diplomatic notes kepada Negara-negara yang terlibat dalam kedua-dua koridor tersebut, kita baru menghantar pagi tadi secara verbal. Daripada 12 ermm 14 negara yang kita hantar, kita telah menerima kebanyakannya daripada mereka hamper lebih daripada separuh sudah pun kita terima. InsyaAllah saya rasa semuanya akan memberi sokongan dan assistant daripada apa yang kita minta. Jadi, masalah ini tak akan timbul kerana kebanyakannya sudah bersetuju secara verbal.

This regarding the, I think what we called security tape about the pilots being checked at the security check out, I think that something that the security personal that the Malaysia Airport will have to respond.

Q: Ada tak so far what's the forensic radar from countries northern corridor and southern corridor especially is there any radar received, maklumat daripada Diego Garcia and soalan kedua berapa kos pencarian S&R setakat ini dan adakah beri investment kepada Negara-negara luar yang turut terlibat dalam S&R ini?

A: Segi kos saya agak terharu kerana Negara-negara yang terlibat tidak memikirkan kos yang terpaksa dibiayai oleh mereka. Dari segi kos yang dibiayai oleh Negara kita, itupun tidak menjadi pertimbangan. Setakat mana yang kita mampu, kita akan pastikan bahawa ianya akan dapat dipenuhi supaya matlamat utama kita untuk mencari dan mengesan dapat dikecapi. Berhubung dengan isu pertama tadi, dari segi maklumat, bukan sahaja dari segi radar tetapi satelit dan juga data berhubung kait dengan usaha pencarian kita menggunakan pesawat dan juga kapal-kapal yang ada. Kita dah umumkan tadi berapa Negara yang terlibat dan kita belum sampai kepada tahap di mana saya mempunyai maklumat untuk dikongsi bersama-sama dengan media pada hari ini.

Q: I would like to ask, is the investigation looking into the pilot or co-pilot and has the investigation reveal any personal problems or money problems?

A: The first question, the answer yes, we looking at it and secondly, no, I cannot say for the moment.

Q: Can you update the simulator investigation?

A: All that I have is that Tan Sri IGP indicated to us yesterday and what was reiterated my statement today.

Q: Sebagaimana yang kita tahu, radar tentera sudah mengesan satu plot yang dibuat pada hari Sabtu pagi tu. Yang kita tahu, radar tentera ni penting untuk kesan semua pergerakan udara atas keselamatan Negara. Pihak tentera kenapa tak ambil tindakan, kenapa tak semak pesawat tu dan jika tiada, ada tak tindakan diambil kepada pegawai bertugas pada hari kejadian.

A: Pertamanya maklumat daripada radar tentera telah saya nyatakan sebelum ini, sensitive tetapi dalam kes ini kita ketepikan kepentingan keselamatan Negara kerana membantu mencari pesawat berkenaan. Dan hanya apabila maklumat itu dapat dikoloberasikan dengan sah oleh agensi-agensi antarabangsa seperti FAA, NTSB, MAIB, is it, also, hanya apabila itu telah disahkan ianya dimaklumkan kepada orang ramai. Dari segi tindakan tentera, apabila maklumat itu diperolehi, telah pun dinyatakan oleh pihak Panglima Angkatan Tentera Udara bahawa mereka pada ketika itu tidak mengagakkan kapal terbang pesawat itu sebagai hostile.

Q: Ada maklumat menyatakan pilot lain yang dijadualkan menerbangkan MH370 tapi tukar kepada Kapten Zaharie padasaat akhir. Adakah ini betul dan jika ya, mengapa dan oleh siapa dan Kapten Zahari juga dikatakan menjalani latihan penerbangan tanpa signal. Adakah di bawah kendalian MAS dan apa keperluannya.

A: Itu tidak betul. Dia sebenarnya dia roster, seperti yang dijadual.

Q: Kita dah share maklumat dengan Negara-negara lain. Di mana letaknya keselamatan Negara kita sekarang ini sedangkan maklumat-maklumat sedang dikongsi bersama?

A : Saya faham maksud soalan tadi dan memang melihat ke hahapan, mkita kena kaji semula kemampuan kita kerana sedikit sebanyak maklumat yang telah kita kongsi bersama agensi-agensi siasatan tadi akan menjejaskan setakat ini, tapitak pada tahap yang membimbangkan. Tetapi untuk jangka masa yang panjang, kita akan lihat, kita akan lihat semula kemampuan radar kita dan ini telah pun saya maklumkan pada YAB PM kita. Itu kita lihat selepas focus keutamaan kita iaitu untuk mencari dan mengesan pesawat berkenaan dapat dicapai.

Q : Macam mana menangani spekulasi-spekulasi oleh media asing sedikit sebanyak memberikan impak negative pada Negara kita?

A : Dengan menjawab setiap spekulasi dan dakwaan setiap hari seperti yang saya lakukan pada 5.30 hari-hari.

Q : Adakah pesawat berkenaan membawa barangan yang berharga?

A : Mengenai kargo, kita ada muatan mangosteen pergi ke negeri China. Quantity banyak. Dalam 3 ke 4 tan.

Dari segi PDRM, kalau tak salah saya Tan Sri IGP telah pun menjawab bahawa pada peringkat awal tidak merasakan keperluan tapi dengan pendedahan terbaru, aircraft dan transponder telah dengan sengaja ditutup, maka mereka kena lihat semula evidence yang ada. Itulah sebabnya mereka kembali ke rumah pilot dengan co-pilot tetapi saya tekankan di sini kerjasama daripada pihak keluarga mereka, saya dimaklumkan cukup baik sekali.

Q : Adakah setakat ini masih kekal dengan pendirian bahawa pesawat tu memang dibawa oleh seseorang dalam pesawat, dilencongkan ke kawasan lain. Berbanding dengan ada teori lain bahawa ada pihak lain yang mungkin dicontrol secara remote, bukan oleh pilot sendiri. Mungkin ada unsur-unsur yang lain?

A : Dari segi remote saya rasa tak mungkin.

Q : Atau pun radar hijack atau sebagainya?

A : I think saya rasa pun tak mungkin. Tetapi kalau sekiranya ada bukti dan maklumat yang boleh kita verify, ianya mesti disiasat. Keduanya, saya boleh mengesahkan terpaksa kita lihat dari segi fakta-fakta yang sedia ada, bukan sahaja dari satu sumber tetapi daripada pihak tentera, daripada DCA, disahkan oleh FAA dan juga NTSB. Maka apa yang diumumkan dan dimaklumkan oleh YAB PM itulah yang kita pegang hari ini untuk melihat kepada operasi kita.

Q : Adakah kebarangkalian MH370 berada di koridor selatan?

A : Tidak. Kedua-dua koridor itu merupakan tumpuan kita tetapi di selatan, koridor di sebelah selatan itu tidak mempunyai banyak Negara yang terlibat sebab itu data daripada satelit, daripada radar yang kita dapat kerjasama daripada Amerika dan juga Australia merupakan sesuatu yang mungkin menjadi tumpuan hari ini, tidak bermakna kita tidak memberi focus yang sama kepada koridor di sebelah utara.

Q : Have the investigator talk to the pilot, the other pilot whose claimed to have heard the pilot of MH370 mumbling?

A : Not that I know.

Q : How often do the pilot and the co-pilot travel KL-Beijing route, and then is the simulator, is there a side route in the simulator?

A : I just can confirm that, the aircraft system was turned off at Kota Bharu at the transponder. That the normal flight normally the Malaysian Air Traffic control were hand over..... (not clear)

Q: Pilot has go through the psychological test before they join. Will MAS relook into the test and second point what are steps MAS would take to reassure passenger for the safety on flight.

A: Well first the psychological test, the psychometric, the psychomotor test is a standard procedure for pilot recruitment. They must go to that test. In terms of going forward, we will look into all this and see whether we can strengthen, tighten all the various entry recruitment examination. As for reassuring going forward, we are right now on the code Tango, that is internal code, which we look at every possible security leaks and shortcoming.

Q: Question is not clear.

A: The manifest forwarded to the Chinese authority and it was cleared, but earliest few hours ago, I've asked the Chinese authorities intelligent authorities to relook the list that they had with them with to that possibility but at the moment, we don't find anything to corroborate what said earlier.

Q: Can you please confirmed with the planes emergency location? Next stamen is not clear.

A: For any aircraft before take off, all system must be made especially emergency system, must be serviceable. So that is one of major item that we check before flight. Every emergency item always put on arm and it will trigger when it touched water or if it's crashed.

Q: Can you determine any passengers attempt od succeed in making cell phone calls or placing text messages after the plane (not clear).

A: Well so far we don't had any evidence from any telephone company of any numbers who trying to contact but anyway we are still checking it.

Q: Question is not clear.

A: Well the passenger manifest has been passed to the police to check on each of their background of the passenger. We know the background of the crew. But you know, the police is doing the investigation on the passengers.

Q: Did you believed the person who said 'alright, goodnight" in the cockpit is the pilot or the co-pilot?

A: Initial investigation indicated to the co-pilot who basically spoke the last time recorded on tape.

Q: Do you have a record on that?

A: The recording is with the air traffic control.

Q: Question is not clear.

A: That is part of the investigation. Cannot reveal.

Q: Can you tell us what time is the air cast was disable and what time is the pilot communication. What type is this whole image? Can you be specific please? (not clear)

A :Last air-caste transmission was 1:07. We don't know when is the air-caste was switched off after that. It was supposed to transmit 30 minutes from there, another transmission. But the transmission did not come through. That was the very last of the transmission, 1:07 when it was switched off? Anytime between then and next 30 minutes. Okay. As far as the pilot comm or pilot communication, understand according to the record, it was about 1:19 I understand, when we got last transmission from the cockpit that says. All right, good night, 1:19.

Q : How do you know that? Because yesterday Mr. Minister said that it has been disabled before the pilot says alright, good night to the control tower. Isn't that means whoever at the cockpit is misleading the control tower and said that?

A : I think that's going to the speculation. I don't think we want to go down to that route. Because I said yesterday, we're based at facts that have been corroborated and verified.

Q : Is that usual that the air-caste is switched off?... (question not that clear)

A : No, there's no indication at the tower. The communication of the pilot at that point of flight is from our Air Traffic Control centre. We have no indication at the control centre to say that the air-caste is switched off. It was revealed when we did the investigation. The information was not downloaded by the air-caste to the passenger in the MAS.

Q : Why the two corridors? Every possibility of the corridor (not clear)

A : It is very technical process and research. We've got the six.....by the.....by the satellite service provider. The satellite is geo satellite on top of Indian Ocean and looking at very big area. And they have latitude. The satellite can only see the aircraft at elevation. At they can see this aircraft elevation at 40 degrees. The only information of each of theis the time when handshake took place. We don't know where it is. No indication, no coordinates. Therefore, we calculated from the last point at the Straits of Malacca. We route the aircraft on the minimum speed that 777 could do and the maximum speed. The minimum speed goes to Laos ended in Laos, and the maximum speed ended at the edge of Caspian Sea, on the north corridor. Therefore, the North Corridor stretches on Laos right to Caspian Sea. Whereas on the South route, the minimum speed goes at the west of Sumatera and maximum speed goes down to Indian Ocean. Therefore, the

Southern Corridor stretches from west of Sumatera, no sorry, East of Sumatera to south of Indian Ocean. That has been verified by NSTB, FAA, AAIB. The Chinese talked to us today and we showed to them. They're agreed with the findings. And the French is already here and we will talk to them tomorrow and show to them what we've done. As you can appreciate the areas of search is huge and what we've been doing since PM announced it a few days ago, he's trying to narrow this and that is why the countries that closes or have assets, whether satellite, radar or assets on the ground have been contacted. This is actually to reduce the area that we're looking at, at this moment.

Q : Could you tell us that last week the passengers' families were told to expect worst, is this position being maintained at the moment? Is there some hope, more hopes some passengers are surviving this? Second question is, can you confirm whether foreign security have clear background of the pilot?

A : On the personal basis as for the families, I always pray there again it is hope, but the urgency and the ground that we need to cover. It is very important for us to focus and that is why, we have impressed on everybody not to speculate, because when we have to look into speculative reports, it will distracted us from our immediate concern which is to find the aircraft.

Q : The US FBI says they have a team ready to be deployed to Malaysia, but it has been specifically not being asked to be here?

A : That's not true. That's clearly false information because I've been working with FBI from day one.

Q : What is the best calculation after 8:11 when the last time of the confirmed time. How long after that it could have replied?

A : We estimate it could've another of serial errors and the multiple criticisms, 30 minutes of fuel, depending on the speed it's flying.

Q : It has been 10 days, is it the time for Malaysian government? (not clear)

A : I think, that's totally erroneous. I've also got a lot of feedback that at the circumstances we're facing, we've been very responsible in our actions. I think it is very responsible of you to say that.

Q : It was in report, in this flight was on commercial flight corridor, flying 5,000 feet, can you confirm that?

Do you have any leads, what so ever that is plane is still intact?

A : As far as the report of 5,000 feet, we're not aware of that report. I think, it's something that the investigation team has to look into. It doesn't come from us. The fact that there are no distress signal, no ransom notes, there are no parties claiming to be responsible, there's always hope.

Q : (not clear) what have you got now?

A : When the time comes, the Chief Police will report that to the media. I'll check with them.

Q : Our knowledge, is it the co-pilot who said, all right, good night?

It seems that the air caste system could have been switched off at 1:07, 1:37 but then the radar communication came in at 1:19, is it possible the air caste system is switched off after the communication with the tower control?

A : We don't know when the air caste system was switched off. What we know was the last transmission and we did not receive the next transmission. Okay.

Q : Somebody in the cockpit communicated saying all right and good night (not clear)

A : Well, like I said, the investigation team is looking at all possibilities because they have to go through and run through the proper simulation of the cockpit. That's why I think we need to focus on finding the aircraft. The quicker we get the black box, those questions will be answered. I think we'll have one more question.

Q : At this moment, most Chinese people are becoming crazily anxious about this incident. But the SAR investigation moves slowly. So, has Malaysian government never thought about using any social networking and social media to help with this in establishment more effective ways of communication with Chinese people? Because some applications like and Wechat are becoming normal of 750 million population in China. We may assist you with these actually.

A : Yes, it would. Secondly, I've been on CCTV. That has been viewed across the world. The feedback that I've got is very positive in trying to try and understand and appreciate what the families are going through. I've always said that whatever we do, we have to think of what the families are going through. That is why we have to be very responsible in coming out with the statements and they must be verified and corroborated because at the end of the day, if they are not and found to be false, people who are going to suffer most are those vey families we're going to protect. Thank you.