

Liow lauds probe team's extension

PUTRAJAYA: Malaysia remains single-minded in its pursuit to prosecute those who are responsible for the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 through appropriate and effective prosecution mechanisms, Transport Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai said.

He said the interim report released by the Joint Investigation Team (JIT), of which Malaysia is a member, last Wednesday, had confirmed the earlier technical report by the Dutch Safety Board (DSB) that the aircraft was undeniably hit by a surface-to-air Buk 9M38 series missile.

He said the report also concluded that the exact location of the launch site was an agricultural field near Pervomaiskyi, a city in Kharkiv, Ukraine, an area which was controlled by pro-Russian rebels at that time.

Liow said the finding was consistent with the DSB report, which was based on materials obtained from the United States and European Space Agency. "Armed with both the JIT and DSB reports, .

Malaysia is ever more resolute in its desire to seek justice," he said yesterday. He said while the report could not determine the perpetrators responsible for the incident, the JIT had identified about 100 individuals that could be linked to the downing of Flight MH17.

Liow said Malaysia, together with its JIT partners the Netherlands, Belgium, Ukraine and Australia, had never wavered in its fight to seek justice for the victims of the tragedy.

"Malaysia would like to record our gratitude to our colleagues in the JIT for its detailed and transparent investigation that now enables us to move forward on more solid ground," he said.

Malaysia, he said, also lauded the announcement that the JIT agreement would be extended to enable investigations to continue unabated. "During this trying time, our thoughts and prayers are with the next of kin and loved ones of the passengers and crew of Flight MH17," he said.

Flight MH17, with 298 passengers and crew, was shot down over eastern Ukraine on July 17, 2014, when travelling from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur. Liow said that the international community must stand united in the quest to make the skies safer for all.

He said there must be mandatory and timely reporting of relevant information on the risks of flying in conflict zones to the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) by member states.

The ICAO must also establish a global protocol to disseminate the information to member states and airlines, he said. "This is not optional. It will serve to save lives."
Bernama

