



4 JUNE 2014

**MH370 PRESS STATEMENT BY HISHAMMUDDIN HUSSEIN
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Introductory Statement

It has been 89 days since MH370 went missing. We have entered a new difficult phase which brings with it new challenges which we will overcome together. Today, I met up with the 4 Ministerial Committees and we discussed on our way forward in the search for MH370.

Let me begin by stating that the ASEAN Member States have publicly acknowledged in April their solidarity as reflected by the concerted efforts in the search mission of the missing MH370. They also recognised the unwavering support from all Member States in this new phase of this unprecedented search. This was again emphasised at the 8th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting held in Nay Pyi Taw on the 20th of May 2014.

We also have a firm commitment, formalised by our Tripartite Agreement on the 5th of May 2014, between Malaysia, Australia and China that the search needs to be a continuous and intensified effort.

In the Joint Communique between the People's Republic of China and Malaysia in conjunction with the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, China and Malaysia have also agreed to work closely together in the next phase of the search operation for MH370 in the southern Indian Ocean. This Joint Communique was signed and agreed upon on the 31st of May by both the Prime Minister of Malaysia, YAB Dato' Sri Najib Tun Razak and the Premier of the People's Republic of China, Premier Li Keqiang.

The Defence Ministers of the Five Power Defence Arrangement have also reaffirmed their continued support for the search mission of MH370.

As we enter the new phase of this search, we are grateful for the continuous support that we have received from the international community.

Next Of Kin Committee

With regards to the next of kin, we will continue to engage with the families of those on board MH370 by providing them with timely updates on the search operation. This initiative has been led by Datin Paduka Chew Mei Fun. We appeal to all parties to be understanding during this extraordinary and difficult time.

My pledge to all the families, wherever they are, is the same: we will do everything in our power to keep you informed. We also appreciate all that has been done by the Chinese Government on this matter.

Technical Committee

Preparations are well underway for the next phase of the search operations which includes the refinement of the search area. A team of experts set up and led by the Australian authorities in Canberra are currently conducting the re-analysis together with Inmarsat. This team has given me the assurance that the search area remains in the arc of the Southern Corridor.

Asset Deployment Committee

On the asset deployment front, we have been in discussions with several Malaysian companies to deploy highly specialised underwater systems and platforms including the Autonomous Unmanned Vehicles (AUVs), Deep-water towed side scan sonars, Remotely Operated Vehicles

(ROVs), and support vessels to deploy these assets to join in the new phase of this search mission.

On that note, I am pleased to announce that PETRONAS has agreed to deploy assets under the Government Furnished Equipment (GFE) approach where Malaysian companies are part of the resources to fund the search operations.

PETRONAS will contribute by providing funds for a Deep Towed Side Scan Sonar. A complete system will accompany the asset with a dedicated support vessel complete with crew members.

Boustead is finalising terms for specialised assets and services to be deployed which will include an Oceanographic Survey Vessel with bathymetric survey capabilities, a Deep Towed Side Scan Sonar for deep sea search and a ROV for recovery purposes.

I also had the opportunity to meet with Chuck Hagel, Secretary of Defence for the United States of America during the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore last weekend. I have officially requested for the US to continue its lease for the Bluefin-21 AUV, to provide the Orion Deep Towed Side Scan Sonar and the Curv-21 ROV.

In addition, the Chinese survey ship, Zhu Kezhen, has covered 4,088km² as part of the bathymetric survey process.

It is important for all the Malaysian entities involved in this effort to be on the same page- working as one team, flying the Malaysian flag to find MH370.

Communication, Coordination And Media Committee

On that note, the previously announced Communication, Coordination and Media Committee will be liaising with our Australian and Chinese counterparts. Jailani Johari, the Deputy Minister for Communications

and Multimedia, will lead this team, consisting of members from all 4 ministerial committees along with the Director General of the Department of Civil Aviation, the Deputy Chief of the Royal Malaysian Navy and Datin Paduka Chew Mei Fun, to Canberra first to acquire the latest updates on the search operation and will then travel to Beijing.

Indeed, this will further strengthen our Tripartite Agreement between Malaysia, Australia and China that the search needs to be a continuous and intensified effort.

Concluding Remarks

Let me stress that the search has not stopped and we will keep searching for the plane for as long as it takes. I would like to conclude by stressing that we will continue with the search operations until we have fully covered the search area. We will strive to explore all possible options in finding MH370

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