

MH370 families plan to search on

They aim to raise RM66mil to fund initiative

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KUALA LUMPUR: Families of those on board flight MH370 are coming together in the hope of raising US\$15mil (RM66.7mil) to fund a private search for the plane.

Grace Subathirai Nathan, spokesman for the group of next of kin Voice370, said the fund-raising would not start until it was certain that the Malaysian, Australian and Chinese governments were not going to resume the search.

"We're waiting for the current data to be fully reviewed and analysed and for the credible evidence the governments are looking for.

"We want the search to continue. It used to be all about our closure, but now it's about all of us. Every time someone we know and love gets on a flight, it's important to know that they will reach their destination safely," she said during the third remembrance event for MH370 at Publika here yesterday.

The event, themed "Search On 3.0: MH370 Is Not History. It's the Future. Fly Safely", was also aimed at promoting global aviation safety.

Grace's mother Anne Daisy was one of the 239 people, including 12 crew members, on board the ill-fated Boeing 777, which left here for Beijing on March 8, 2014.

Anne had planned to visit her husband, Department of Civil Aviation official V.P.R. Nathan, who was posted to Beijing.

"Nothing much has changed. It's just as hard as it was three years ago and I still break down.

"It's still very painful every day, but I try to do as much as I can in the hope that maybe it will prevent something similar from happening again," the 29-year-old lawyer said.

Australian Danica Weeks, 40, who flew to

Malaysia for the memorial event, said the next of kin were gathered because they wanted the search to go on.

She said not knowing what happened to the plane meant that it could happen again and everybody would be at risk.

"This isn't over and MH370 cannot remain a mystery. ... The governments need to keep searching, not for us but for everybody.

"The family is coping terribly and it doesn't get easier with time.

"We need peace and we don't have peace right now, and we'll press on until we do," said Weeks, whose husband Paul, a mechanical engineer, was heading to Beijing for a transit flight to Mongolia to start a new job.

Transport Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai, who had a chat with Weeks during the event, hugged her two sons - Lincoln, six, and Jack, three - and told them: "You all have to take care of mummy, okay?"

Nurlaila Ngah, the wife of MH370 cabin crew member Wan Swaid Wan Ismail, said the family was moving on to as normal a life as they could.

"My time with the kids is precious because they really need me. They don't have their father.

"I hope they (the governments) could find the plane. I always pray for the best for the search so that at least we could have some closure. Only God knows when," Nurlaila said.

At yesterday's rather sombre event, there was also an exhibition of the interpretations of the families' experiences by 20 Malaysian artists, a song presentation, a ballet dance performance and the releasing of white doves.

There were also talks on aviation safety, ocean drift modelling techniques and the importance of closure by experts.