

Malaysia dispatches team to verify plane wreckage found in Indian Ocean

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United Nations: Malaysia has sent a team to verify whether a mysterious piece of plane debris washed up on a French island in the Indian Ocean belonged to the ill-fated MH370 that disappeared without a trace March last year with 239 people on board.

Malaysia's Minister of Transport Liow Tiong Lai told reporters here yesterday that he had received information from his colleagues in Malaysia about the wreckage that has been spotted in the French island of La Reunion.

The Boeing 777-200 plane of Malaysia Airlines went missing on March 8, 2014, an hour after taking off from Kuala Lumpur for Beijing with 239 people on board, including five Indians and one Indian-Canadian.

"I have sent a team to verify the wreckage. Anyway we need to verify," he said following a Security Council meeting on another Malaysia Airlines flight MH17, which crashed in July 2014 in Donetsk, Ukraine.

"Whatever wreckage found needs to be further verified before we can further confirm whether it belongs to MH370," he said.

"So we have dispatched a team to investigate on this issues and we hope that we can identify it as soon as possible," he added.

The mysterious piece of plane debris washed up on the French Indian Ocean island of La Reunion, prompting speculation that it could be part of the missing Malaysia Airlines flight.

The two-metre-long piece of wreckage, which seemed to be part of a wing, was found by people cleaning up a beach.

"It was covered in shells, so one would say it had been in the water a long time," said one witness.

French air transport officials have already opened a probe to investigate where the wreckage could have come from. No part of the MH370 wreckage has been found so far. Malaysian authorities in January declared that all on board were presumed dead.

- PTI