



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Comments by Dr Tony Tan Keng Yam, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, at Sembawang Edusave Ceremony**

I would like to extend my deepest sympathies and condolences to the families and relatives of the passengers and crew on board Silkair Flight MI 185.

This is a sad day for Singaporeans.

The crash is a national tragedy that has touched all of us, none more so than those who have lost loved ones in the air crash. Our thoughts and sympathies go out to all the bereaved families.

When we first heard that the aircraft may have been lost on Friday, 19 December, we put some of our RSAF and RSN assets on standby, and we were able to very quickly deploy them to the crash site once the news was confirmed.

We have been doing what we can to assist and support the Indonesian authorities in this search and rescue or SAR operation. Our Indonesian friends have put in considerable effort in searching the area, employing helicopters, naval vessels and naval divers in the process.

We are very thankful for their unstinting effort and dedication in helping us in this very difficult time. At the moment, the Indonesian and Singaporean authorities are doing their best to look for survivors and recover the bodies of those involved in the crash as soon as possible. However, we have not found any survivors so far.

As of 1000 hrs, 21 Dec, total SAF assets committed include five Fokker 50 and four C-130 flights, two Super-Pumas deployed for SAR at Palembang; one Missile Corvette Vessel, one Missile Gun Boat, one Landing Ship Deck, one Mine Counter-measure Vessel (MCMV), seven naval diving unit (NDU) teams and six medical teams. There are about 330 SAF personnel involved.

More assets from the SAF are on standby and will be deployed when activated. Our SAF operations are continuing even as we speak. The Government is also providing as much support as we can to the relatives of the passengers as many will be in a state of shock. We have deployed "care teams" on site to help the relatives cope with this unfortunate tragedy.

The detailed circumstances surrounding this accident are still unclear. We know that the aircraft was a new one, the aircrew was experienced, there was good weather, the terrain was not mountainous, and there was no distress call whatsoever.

It is important that Singapore, Indonesia and representatives from Boeing and the US National Transportation Safety Board conduct a thorough investigation to determine the cause of the accident. We must prevent such a tragedy from ever happening again.

National Archives of Singapore