

Obama discusses MH17 crash with Putin
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MH17 President Barack Obama and Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday discussed a downed passenger plane along the Russian-Ukraine border during a phone call in which Obama warned Moscow of more sanctions if it does not change course in Ukraine.

"I can confirm that President Putin near the end of this morning's phone call with President Obama noted the early reports of a downed passenger jet near the Russia-Ukraine border," White House spokesperson Josh Earnest said.

Earnest, briefing reporters on Obama's Air Force One flight from Washington to Delaware, said Obama was briefed by his advisers on the crash and directed top US officials to remain in close contact with Ukrainian officials.

"I can confirm that we've seen those reports but I'm not in a position to confirm any of the details at this point," Earnest said.

The Obama-Putin phone call was made at the request of Moscow a day after the United States and European countries imposed new sanctions on Russia over its aggression against Ukraine.

The new round of US sanctions included penalties against Russia's largest oil producer, Rosneft and other energy, financial and defense firms.

Obama told Putin "additional steps are on the table if Russia doesn't change course," Earnest said.

The United States is committed to ensuring that this international norm of countries respecting the territorial integrity of other countries is prioritised."

"The president has made clear that the international community, the United States and our European allies are willing to take steps and impose economic costs on Russia if they decline to respect those basic norms," Earnest said.