

Others shoot but Najib hoots at Russia
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MH17 As scenes of looting and reports of bodies being carted away from the MH17 crash site by unidentified men emerge, world leaders are becoming increasingly agitated and their statements, increasingly stronger with regard to Russia.

But in comparison, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak seems to be a little mellow.

While the US, which is backing the Ukrainian government, has been quick to blame Russia for having a hand in the shooting down of Flight MH17, Malaysia and other countries whose citizens were on board the aircraft have been more prudent.

However, the fact remains that the aircraft that was carrying 298 passengers and crew was shot down and crashed in territory controlled by Russian-backed separatists, over whom Moscow wields significant influence.

Since the incident, several world leaders have urged Russian President Vladimir Putin to use his influence to get the rebels in eastern Ukraine to provide safe passage for investigators and recovery workers to the site.

The Ukraine government has said that it has no control over its eastern territory and is at the mercy of the separatists.

Word of assurance from Russia does not appear to have extended to action on the ground, courting further anger from international leaders.

Here is a highlight of how world leaders have conducted themselves with regard to Russia and securing the crash site.

Malaysia (44 casualties)

Since the MH17 incident on July 17, Najib has only made reference to Russia once during his televised national address on the subsequent day after a phone call with Putin.

"I have also asked Russian President Vladimir Putin to give every cooperation in order to achieve the said objectives (securing the site, recovering the dead and ensuring justice)," he said.

Last night, as reports of rebels seizing the bodies of victims emerged, Najib had this to say: "I want the victims to be brought back before Hari Raya. We cannot allow a situation where they can be taken by anyone and placed at unknown locations."

Najib's strongest statement came hours after the incident where he said: "If it transpires that the plane was indeed shot down, we insist that the perpetrators must be swiftly brought to justice."

Since then, he has repeatedly stressed Malaysia should not point fingers until the investigation is completed.

It was one of Najib's lieutenants, Health Minister Dr S Subramaniam, who made the unexpected move to publicly express frustration at Russia and Ukraine, though in not so strong terms.

"I am angry that our Smart (Special Malaysian Disaster Assistance and Rescue Team) is not getting the necessary support and access to the crash site in recovery operations.

"Ukranian and Russian authorities owe it to us to provide support for our safe participation," Subramaniam said in a statement on Facebook yesterday.

Najib has also come under criticism from veteran newsman Kadir Jasin, a close associate of former prime minister Mahathir Mohamad.

"I am disappointed at the government's soft action (too diplomatic) in this matter.

"The government should have issued a tough and strong statement from the beginning calling for the United Nations and international aviation agencies' intervention on top of condemning any nation that was direct or indirectly involved in the violent action," he said.

Netherlands (192 casualties)

Netherlands Prime Minister Mark Rutte described the looting of the crash site as "disgusting" in a press conference on July 19.

"I told him (Putin) time is running out for you to show the world that you have good intentions, that you will take responsibility.

"Putin now has to show that he will do what is expected of him and will exert his influence," said Rutte after what he described as an "intense" phone conversation with Putin, according to Dutchnews.nl.

A day later, as bodies were being taken away by unidentified men, Rutte said he was shocked and described the scene as "shameful".

"Given today's developments and images from this morning, I sent a message to the president to once more exert his influence on the rebels.

"He (Putin) promised me his cooperation yesterday. I told him that he must show the world

that he wants to help.

"He must now take responsibility vis-a-vis the rebels... the Netherlands and the world will see that he does what needs to be done," Rutte was quoted as saying by news.com.au.

Australia (27 casualties)

Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott said Putin was saying "all the right things" in a phone conversation with him.

"Now he has to be as good as his word... And I will be speaking regularly to the Russian president to do my best to hold him to his word," Abbot is quoted as saying in a radio interview, according to Sydney Morning Herald.

Abbott also criticised the manner the crash site was being handled.

"The site is being treated more like a garden clean-up than a forensic investigation...The wreckage has been picked over, it's been trashed, it's been trampled.

"If he (Putin) wants to be a friend of Australia, if he wants to be a friend of decency and humanity, all assistance that he might be able to offer would be deeply appreciated at this time," he is quoted as saying.

Indonesia (12 casualties)

Apart from Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's initial statement that it was a "war crime" if Flight MH17 was indeed shot down, the republic's response has generally been muted despite the transgressions at the crash site.

Susilo is on his way out of office after serving two-terms as president.

The Indonesia presidential election was held on July 9 and votes are still being counted but Joko Widodo appears set to become the next president.

United Kingdom (10 casualties)

The UK Prime Minister's Office in a statement said UK Prime Minister David Cameron had spoken with Putin yesterday.

"The PM emphasised that the families of the 298 individuals need to know that everything is being done to make this happen and called on President Putin to use his influence on the pro-Russian separatists to ensure this happens.

"The delay and restrictions so far were completely unacceptable and indefensible," reads the statement.

On the same day, Cameron's column on the MH17 incident appeared in UK's Sunday Times.

However, the column was less about the crash site and was directed towards blaming Russia's destabilising of Ukraine as contributing to the downing of Flight MH17 and calling on Europe to punish the former Soviet republic.

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