

US will continue to work with MH17 Joint Investigation Team
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The United States today reaffirmed its commitment that it will continue to work with the Joint Investigation Team investigating the downing of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17.

The US Department of State spokesperson John Kirby also urged other countries that are in a position to assist, to cooperate fully so that those responsible were held accountable.

Yesterday, the Dutch-led joint investigation team concluded in the interim report that MH17 was shot down by a BUK missile which was brought from Russia to Ukraine.

Meanwhile, according to a statement from the team on the Netherlands Public Prosecution Service website, the BUK missile was fired from a farmland near the city of Pervomaiskyi, "which, at the time, was controlled by pro-Russian fighters".

"While nothing can take away the grief of those who lost loved ones on that tragic day, this announcement is another step towards bringing to justice those responsible for this outrageous attack," Kirby said in a statement released by the US Embassy in Kuala Lumpur.

Kirby said the findings corroborated US Secretary of State John Kerry's statement in the days following the tragedy that MH17 was shot down by a BUK surface-to-air missile fired from Russian-backed, separatist-controlled territory in eastern Ukraine.

Earlier, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak said Malaysia was committed to bringing those responsible for downing MH17 to be brought to justice and there was no two ways about it.

MH17 was shot down while cruising at an altitude of 30,000 feet and crashed in a tense area of Ukraine, near the Russian border.

The Boeing B777 aircraft was travelling from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur and had 298 passengers and crew. It was shot down over eastern Ukraine on July 17, 2014, killing all on board.

Last year, Dutch Safety Board chairperson Tjibbe Joustra confirmed that MH17 was shot down by a BUK surface-to-air missile over eastern Ukraine.

The report came out after 15 months of investigation undertaken by a joint investigation team from the Netherlands, Ukraine, Malaysia, Australia, the United Kingdom, US and Russia.

'Investigation biased'

However, the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Malaysia today expressed disappointment over the findings and claimed that the investigation was biased and politically motivated.

In a statement, it said "nothing has changed in the investigation into the Boeing crash" despite the conclusions reached by the Dutch Public Prosecutor's Office.

The statement said Russia had from the very beginning suggested working together and relying on facts alone, but the international investigators excluded Russia from fully participating in the investigation and assigned a secondary role to its efforts.

"It sounds like a bad joke but instead they made Ukraine a full member of the Joint Investigation Team (JIT), allowing it to forge evidence and steer the matter in its favour," it said.

Russia has also claimed that the investigators continue to ignore its irrefutable evidence, even though it is essentially the only country that has provided credible information and continues to uncover new information.

"We hope now that Russia has transferred to the JIT such indisputable evidence as initial radar images - and any expert will understand why it is indisputable - the situation will change and the JIT's final conclusions, unlike its preliminary conclusions, will reflect the objective truth and point to the real perpetrators of this tragedy," it said.

- *Bernama*