

A decade after MH17, 298 dead: Lest we forget!

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Bernama

It has been a decade since the downing of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 in 2014, which resulted in the deaths of all 298 people on board, including 80 children.

As a tribute to those who perished, a commemoration will be held on July 17 at the National Monument MH17 at Park Vijfhuizen (above) near Schiphol Airport, said the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Malaysia.

Five Malaysian media representatives including national news agency Bernama were invited to participate in the remembrance programmes, scheduled for three days, starting on July 15.

They include a series of site visits designed to provide an in-depth understanding of the ongoing cooperation between the Netherlands and Malaysia in the aftermath of the atrocity.

On the first day, an interview session was scheduled with Digna van Boetzelaer, former chief public prosecutor of the Public Prosecution Office of North Holland.

She was leading the prosecution and criminal investigation into the downing of flight MH17.

The schedule includes an interview with the victims' families and visits to the reconstruction of flight MH17, which is placed in a military base in Gilze-Rijen, central Netherlands.

"Apart from the next-of-kin, almost 1,500 people from across the world will gather for the ceremony. The pain of their (victims') passing is still felt intensely today, by their families and friends all over the world," the embassy said.

"As we approach 10 years since this tragedy, Australia, Belgium, Malaysia, the Netherlands, and Ukraine wish to underline that we remain steadfast in our commitment to achieving truth, justice, and accountability for the victims of the downing of flight MH17 and their next-of-kin.

"Those who have been left behind deserve closure. They need to know that everything that can be done has been done to prevent these tragedies from happening in the future," the embassy added.

Hague Court convicted three men

On July 14, 2014, MH17 was downed by a Buk missile while flying over conflict-

hit eastern Ukraine, and everybody on board was killed.

The victims came from 17 countries, including 198 Dutch nationals, 43 Malaysians, 38 Australians, and 10 from the United Kingdom.

Following the horrific incident, on Nov 17, 2022, the Hague District Court convicted in absentia two Russians and a Ukrainian to life imprisonment after finding them guilty on charges of causing the downing of MH17 and the murders of all 298 people on board.

They are Russians Igor Girkin and Sergei Dubinsky, as well as Ukrainian citizen Leonid Kharchenko. However, the court acquitted another Russian, Oleg Pulatov, of the same charges.

The court also ordered the three men to pay more than €16 million (RM75.5 million) in compensation to the relatives of the victims.

- Bernama

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