

**MH17: Putin Assures Assistance For Investigation Team To Enter Incident Site - Najib
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KUALA LUMPUR, July 18 (Bernama) -- Russian President Vladimir Putin has given his assurance to use his influence to enable a Malaysian investigation team to enter the crash site of MH17 to commence investigations into the tragedy.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said in a telephone conversation with Putin today after breaking fast this evening, the Russian President stated that Moscow understood the need to investigate the incident.

"President Putin said he hoped Ukraine President (Petro Poroshenko) would agree to a ceasefire to enable the entry of the investigation team into the site.

"Putin said the party in control of the area wants an objective investigation to be conducted and Putin also said Russia did not have the capacity to shoot down the aircraft," Najib told reporters after receiving the call from Putin.

Earlier, Najib attended a breaking of fast with the media organised by the Communications and Multimedia Ministry at the Al-Muhammadi Mosque compound in Angkasapuri, here.

In the telephone call, the prime minister also told Putin on the need for the investigation team to be allowed into the crash site to start the investigation.

He said the investigation team which comprised Malaysian representatives should be given assurance on safety while carrying out their task.

"I also told Putin that the site should not be tampered before the team begins its investigation," he said.

Asked which party was responsible for the incident, Najib said Malaysia was a victim of an intense geopolitical conflict in the area.

"So that's the one that hangs over the whole attempt to initiate an immediate investigation," he said.

Najib said the group in control of the MH17 crash site and the Ukrainian government must agree to a ceasefire to enable the investigation team to enter the incident site as soon as possible.

"There is a commitment for a ceasefire by both parties but it should be translated into a form of an agreement, and I have informed President Putin that our investigation team has left for Kiev and I want them to be allowed into the area," he said.

On the involvement of some of the world's superpowers in the incident, Najib said the matter was very complex as they had their own and opposing views.

Najib said although he had no plans to visit Kiev on the incident, he was in constant contact with the leaders concerned.

He said today, he had received calls from leaders of several countries including Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbot, New Zealand Prime Minister John Key, United Nations Secretary-General (UN) Ban Ki-moon and British Prime Minister David Cameron.

On reports that the MH17 plane was shot down and the parties involved should be held responsible, the prime minister said it needed complete investigation based on facts and solid evidence.

He said if the aircraft was shot down, forensic investigations would be able to determine it with ample evidence recovered from the aircraft.

MH17 aircraft, carrying 298 passengers and crew, was on its way from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur when it crashed in Ukraine, near the Russian border, on Thursday.

The Boeing 777 plane left Amsterdam at 12.15pm (local time) on Thursday and was expected to arrive at Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) at 6.10am (Malaysian time) on Friday.

Of the 298 passengers on board MH17, 44 were Malaysians.

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