

World Leaders React With Shock Over Flight MH17 Tragedy

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KUALA LUMPUR, July 18 (Bernama) -- World leaders have reacted with shock over the tragedy that befell Malaysia Airlines (MAS) Flight MH17 that crashed yesterday in Ukraine near its border with Russia.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak tweeted: "I am shocked by reports that an MH plane crashed. We are launching an immediate investigation."

US President Barack Obama described the crash as a "terrible tragedy" and said the United States would offer any assistance necessary to help determine what happened and why.

Najib had said Ukrainian authorities believe that the plane was shot down. The plane, en route from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur, was carrying 280 passengers and 15 crew.

Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong expressed shock and said he was sad to hear of the crash.

In his Facebook post, Lee said: "Our thoughts and prayers are with the passengers and crew, and their families."

Russian President Vladimir Putin expressed his deep condolences to Najib over the crash.

The official website, <http://eng.kremlin.ru>, said: "The President of Russia asked the Prime Minister of Malaysia to convey his deepest sympathy and support to the victims' families."

Reuters news agency reported Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte as saying he was shocked by the incident.

"I am deeply shocked by the dramatic reports on the crash of Malaysia Airlines MH17," he was quoted as saying, and noting that he had been in touch with Ukraine president Petro Poroshenko.

Flight MH17 left Amsterdam at 12.15 pm (Amsterdam time) yesterday and was scheduled to arrive at KL International Airport at 6.10 am (Malaysian time) today.

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