

Holland warns Putin on 'last chance' to help with plane disaster
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Russian President Vladimir Putin has one last chance to show he is serious about helping rescuers recover the bodies of the victims of the crash of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17, the Dutch prime minister said.

More than half the passengers aboard the flight, which crashed near a village in eastern Ukraine, were Dutch citizens, and images of recognisably Dutch personal belongings and passports strewn across the crash site have shocked the Dutch public.

"I was shocked at the pictures of utterly disrespectful behaviour at this tragic spot. It's revolting," Mark Rutte said, referring to allegations that the bodies of the passengers, including 193 of his countrymen, were being dragged about and allowed to rot at the scene.

"He has one last chance to show he means to help," Rutte said of Putin, minutes after what he described as a "very intense" conversation with the Russian leader. He added that the leaders of Germany, Britain and Australia shared his view.

Foreign Minister Frans Timmermans, who is in the Ukrainian capital Kiev with a team of Dutch forensics experts trying to secure safe access to the crash site, said access so far had been too limited to allow them to carry out their work of identifying the victims and repatriating them.

One Dutch newspaper printed pictures of rebel commanders who it said had shot down the Boeing 777 aircraft under the front-page headline "Murderers".

The daily De Telegraaf called on the Dutch government to rethink its policy of restraint towards Russia.

"The government must make clear to the world that we are beside ourselves with rage," the newspaper said.

In a sign of the risks involved in accessing the wreckage, Malaysia Airlines, which had earlier promised to take relatives of victims to inspect the crash site, told national television it would no longer do so because it could not guarantee the relatives' safety. – Reuters, July 20, 2014.

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