

MH17 Was Shot Down By Buk Missile

Bernama

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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 13 (Bernama) -- The Dutch Safety Board has confirmed that Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 was shot down by a Buk surface-to-air missile over eastern Ukraine last year.

Its chairman, Tjibbe Joustra said the missile's warhead detonated on the left side of the aircraft's cockpit.

"MH17 was shot down by a Buk surface-to-air missile," he said when presenting the final report on the MH17 tragedy at the Gilze-Rijen air base, Netherlands on Tuesday, which was aired live via international media.

MH17 was shot down while cruising at an altitude of 30,000ft and crashed in a tense area of Ukraine near the Russian border on July 17, 2014. All 283 passengers and 15 crew onboard the Boeing 777 aircraft, which was en route to Kuala Lumpur from Amsterdam, perished.

Joustra said the investigation had shown that MH17's flight progressed normally up to the moment when the jet was flying over the eastern part of Ukraine.

He said at 13.20 UTC (Coordinated Universal Time) a 9N314M warhead, launched by a Buk surface-to-air missile system from a 320-square-kilometre area in the eastern part of Ukraine, detonated to the left and above the cockpit.

"The forward section of the aircraft was penetrated by hundreds of high-energy objects coming from the warhead.

"As a result of the impact and the subsequent blast, the three crew members in the cockpit were killed immediately and the aeroplane broke up in the air," he said.

He said wreckage from the aeroplane was distributed over various sites within an area of 50 square kilometres and all 298 occupants were killed.

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

Joustra said the Dutch Safety Board had established the cause of the crash on the basis of several sources including the weapon system used based on among other things, the damage pattern on the wreckage, the fragments found in the wreckage and in the bodies of crew members, and the way in which the aircraft broke up.

He said the findings were also supported by the data on the flight recorders, whereby the

Cockpit Voice Recorder picked up a sound peak during the final milliseconds.

Joustra said the Dutch Safety Board also excluded other potential causes, such as an explosion inside the aeroplane or an air-to-air missile,

"No scenario other than a Buk surface-to-air missile can explain this combination of facts," he said.

Joustra said the investigation had ruled out the possibilities of technical defects of the aircraft, air-to-air missile attack and meteor collision as the cause of the tragedy.

On the exact location where the missile was launched, Joustra said, additional forensics investigation would be needed to establish the exact launching location.

However, he said such investigation was outside the scope of the Dutch Safety Board's mandate.

Pertaining to the eastern part of Ukraine's airspace, he said the airspace was much in use, where between July 14 and 17 in 2014, 61 operators from 32 countries routed their flights through the airspace.

"On the day of the crash, until the airspace was closed, 160 commercial airliners flew over the area," he said.

He also said Malaysia Airlines prepared and operated flight MH17 in accordance with regulations. "As the state of departure, the Netherlands had no responsibility to advise Malaysia Airlines (or KLM, as its code share partner) with regard to the chosen flight route," he said.

On July 14, five countries namely Malaysia, Australia, Belgium, the Netherlands and Ukraine had asked the United Nations (UN) Security Council to establish an international criminal tribunal to try those responsible for crimes connected to the downing of MH17.

However, Russia used its veto right in the UN Security Council to block the proposal on July 30.

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