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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY  
MR. ALEKSANDR VOLGAREV, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF  
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1383rd MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

21 July 2022

**On the anniversary of the crash of flight MH17**

Mr. Chairperson,

Eight years ago, on 17 July 2014, a Boeing 777 aircraft belonging to Malaysia Airlines that was flying on the MH17 route from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur crashed in Donbas. All 298 people on board the aircraft were killed in this disaster.

The Russian Federation has on several occasions and at various levels expressed its sincere condolences to the families and friends of the deceased. To our great regret, the high degree of politicization of this tragedy by certain countries is preventing to this day a comprehensive, thorough and truly independent international investigation from being conducted, as called for by United Nations Security Council resolution 2166 in particular.

Russia from the very outset wanted to take an active part in the investigation. However, that did not happen. In contrast, Ukraine, which did not close the airspace over its territory during the conflict, was invited to form part of the Joint Investigation Team. Malaysia, the owner of the aircraft, was not invited until later on, namely once the Australians, the Dutch and the Malaysians had agreed among themselves that anything adopted by this team would have to be adopted by consensus. This means that Ukraine had veto power over this investigation.

The way in which the circumstances of the tragedy were examined and the course of the legal proceedings initiated in the Netherlands are indicative of a striving to make the findings fit the political assessments and bold assertions made in Western capitals immediately after the aircraft crashed. Russia had been pronounced guilty in advance. For within the space of a few hours, if not minutes, just as if everyone had been waiting for a signal, the media and then Western political figures began spouting accusations against Russia and its leadership, blaming them for the deaths of these people. The entire work of the investigators was forced into the Procrustean bed defined by these political directives. It is not surprising that they effectively ignored the Russian radar data made available to the Netherlands, along with documentation testifying to the fact that the missile which hit the Boeing belonged to Ukraine and was launched from territory controlled by the Ukrainian Government.

We would remind you that the Russian defence corporation Almaz-Antey, the manufacturer of Buk surface-to-air missile systems, conducted full-scale tests on three occasions to model the scenario of an aircraft being downed in the skies over Donbas. These tests were based on data collected in the course of more than forty years of use of anti-aircraft missiles of this category. They confirmed that flight MH17 could only have been downed by a 9M38 missile launched from territory controlled by the Ukrainian military, who were equipped with Buk systems. It is also worth pointing out here that according to the lawyers of one of the defendants, even the prosecution service of the Netherlands has acknowledged that it was technically possible for the aircraft to have been downed by a missile fired from a Buk system from the positions of the Ukrainian armed forces. But this version was simply brushed aside.

Instead, the “evidence base” rests on dubious sources of information: the testimony of anonymous witnesses, social media, photographs and video footage of poor quality, unsubstantiated data from the Ukrainian intelligence services, investigations by allegedly independent bloggers.

Moreover, in the course of the investigation and then during the trial, this key question was never clarified: how did the Boeing on flight MH17 actually find itself flying over the zone of hostilities when the Ukrainian Government’s punitive operation against the population of Donbas was in full swing? Why did Ukraine, which threw its military might, including combat aircraft, at the towns and cities of Donbas not close its airspace to civil aviation at the same time? The Ukrainian Government itself, by the way, has yet to make available the data from its own radars, while the US Government has still not handed over the satellite images on which, so the Americans claim, one can see the exact moment of the missile launch. All this suggests that someone stood to benefit from the fact that the Boeing was in the skies over Donbas at that particular moment in time.

We note that in the context of the Russian special military operation to protect the population of Donbas, a number of States have set about merely ratcheting up the political pressure so as to foster the “necessary” anti-Russian media coverage in relation to the tragedy of flight MH17. There is no other way we can interpret the international lawsuits and political documents that have been initiated simultaneously. A striking example is a recent resolution of 23 June 2022 by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, in which Russia’s alleged “guilt” is postulated. Another is the joint complaint against Russia submitted on 14 March 2022 by the Netherlands and Australia to the International Civil Aviation Organization.

We reiterate that if transparency and objectivity are not ensured in the investigation, if all the circumstances are not examined, but, instead, conclusions and assessments that benefit the Ukrainian Government and its foreign sponsors are promoted exclusively, then any new investigation cannot be anything but yet another political farce.

Thank you for your attention.