

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
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AT THE 1187th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

31 May 2018

**In connection with the accusations against Russia regarding the downing of
the Malaysian Boeing in Ukraine in 2014**

Mr. Chairperson,

The hastiness of the judgements and the politicization of the accusations following the preliminary results of the criminal investigation into the downing of the Malaysian Boeing MH17 in eastern Ukraine in 2014 are highly reminiscent of the Skripal affair. Once again before the conclusion of the inquiry and without any reliable evidence, it is being said that it is “highly likely” that it was Russia. This approach seems to be becoming a marked trend in international relations. This is all highly regrettable.

After four years, our attitude to the tragedy has not changed. We are outraged by this terrible incident, deeply mourn the victims and sympathize with their families and friends. We insist that the investigation be carried out in good faith. Those really responsible for this incident should be identified on the basis of reliable evidence and brought to justice.

Since the Dutch authorities have raised the question at the diplomatic level, where professional dialogue may be expected, let us consider the facts. We have a number of questions regarding the conduct of the investigation. We should like to receive answers to them.

1. Russia was at the origins of the adoption of United Nations Security Council resolution 2166, which demanded a full and independent international investigation and defined clear criteria for it. We originally proposed a collaborative effort. We were not invited to participate in the joint investigation team, unlike Ukraine, despite the fact that it had violated international rules and failed to close the airspace over territories in which combat activity was taking place. Why was such a one-sided and selective approach to the investigation taken?

2. In October 2016, Russia submitted to the investigation primary radar data from the Rostov region on that tragic day. Any specialist in this area knows that it is impossible to fake or alter such material. The information presented by us completely ruled out the possibility

that the missile that downed the Boeing was launched from territory under the control of the militia. Why was this information not included in the case? Do the Dutch investigators intend to give us an official answer to the question regarding the primary radar information?

3. Why has Ukraine failed to present data from its radar observations, although it is known to have at least three radar installations on its territory? Where are the satellite images that the United States of America promised immediately after the disaster?

4. The accusations that Russia has not co-operated with the investigation are completely unfounded. Let us take a look at the facts. In July 2016, Dutch experts and investigators visited Moscow and conducted intensive consultations with Russian experts. The Office of the Russian Prosecutor General reacted promptly and fully at all times to requests for legal assistance. At the request of the Dutch experts, technical and design information regarding the Buk missile system were declassified and made available to the investigation. The results of the full-scale test conducted by AO Kontsern VKO Almaz-Antey, the manufacturer of this type of missile, were presented. Why was this information ignored in the final report of the Dutch Safety Board on the technical reasons for the downing of the Boeing, which was itself full of inconsistencies and inaccuracies? Why did the joint investigation team say nothing at the press conference about the assistance in the investigations provided by us?

5. The Office of the Russian Prosecutor General is currently considering two further requests for legal assistance. Why has the joint investigation team failed to wait for our reaction and issued its version of the events before the investigation has been officially concluded?

6. Since 2014 there has not been one single special briefing in the UN Security Council regarding the conduct of the investigation into the plane crash. Why is the transparency of the investigation not being ensured?

7. The investigation is based on dubious research in social media by bloggers from the Bellingcat agency, which has already been exposed for manipulating facts. Do you seriously propose to rely on such data? Does this mean that now any blogger can come out with a theory that will be supported by States? Where, if you please, is there something like real evidence, apart from retouched photos from a dubious website? After all, the Dutch experts visited the site of the tragedy, talked with local inhabitants and collected material. Let's see it.

Now to the alleged involvement of Russian armed forces in the tragedy and the intact engine casing of the Buk anti-aircraft missile shown at the press conference. Evidently, the spokespersons prefer not to reveal the date and place where this engine was discovered or the people who presented this unit to the investigation board.

This question has been studied in detail in the Russian Ministry of Defence. The serial number on this missile engine indicates conclusively that it was manufactured in 1986 in the Soviet Union. I would recall for your information that the warranty period for the use of this type of anti-aircraft missile is 15 years. The time limit given by the manufacturer can be extended by five years, but only twice. After 25 years, all Buk missiles without exception are decommissioned and recycled. The further use of these products, above all because of the unsafe nature of the propellant charges, poses a direct threat to the lives of military personnel.

The time limit for the use of the missile whose engine was presented by the Dutch board last Thursday expired in 2011 (1986 plus 25), after which all missiles from that year were withdrawn, decommissioned and sent for recycling.

All this is obviously a matter for the Russian air defence departments alone, which have obtained and continue to obtain the necessary missile armaments in good working order from a single manufacturer, also located in Russia. Moreover, since the USSR ceased to exist in 1991 and the military equipment was assigned to Ukraine, which took over around 20 Buk anti-aircraft divisions, not one new anti-aircraft missile has been delivered.

Thus, the sole reason for the deliberate failure by the Dutch investigation board to reveal the origins of a missile engine made in 1986 is the high probability that it belonged to the Ukrainian armed forces.

In summary, the facts presented today demonstrate the bias and one-sidedness of the investigation. And yet, we are the ones who are being called upon to take responsibility for what happened. Is the absurdity of such demands not evident to you? Moreover, I would recall that attempts to talk to Russia in the language of ultimatums does not help anyone.

In spite of all these questions, Russian is still willing to co-operate with the investigation so as to determine the truth behind this tragedy and to bring to justice those responsible for it. The main thing is that our co-operation is honest and that the information and facts presented by us are not ignored.

Thank you for your attention.