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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY  
MR. MAXIM BUYAKEVICH, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF  
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1483rd MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

18 July 2024

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

Madam Chairperson,

Ten years ago, on 17 July 2014, a major tragedy occurred in Donbas when a Boeing 777 aircraft belonging to Malaysia Airlines that was flying on the MH17 route from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur crashed there. All 298 people on board were killed. The Russian Federation has expressed its condolences to the victims' relatives on several occasions and at various levels. And today again we repeat that we sympathize wholeheartedly with all those who lost loved ones on that day.

But under no circumstances can we accept the monstrous level of politicization of this tragedy that has unfolded in a number of Western countries in its aftermath. The deaths of the passengers on flight MH17 have been used in a profane manner to damage Russia's reputation. The way the investigation into the disaster was conducted and the subsequent trial did not conform to any principles of objective and unbiased justice. The trial was purely political, and the truth about what happened in the skies over Donbas on 17 July 2014 was of no interest to the organizers of that judicial travesty. We note that there has been a violation of United Nations Security Council resolution 2166, which called for a full, thorough and truly independent international investigation.

We would remind you that Russia was committed to taking an active part in the investigation from the very outset. However, that was not to be. 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 (JIT), whose members agreed among themselves that whatever decisions the JIT took should be adopted by consensus. This means that the Kyiv regime, or those behind it, had a *de facto* veto over the entire investigation. Is this investigation format even remotely appropriate for establishing the truth?

The way in which the circumstances of the tragedy were examined, and also the course of the judicial proceedings initiated in the Netherlands, clearly betrayed an intention to fit the findings to political requirements. All assessments from Western capitals had already been made immediately after the plane crash. Russia had been pronounced guilty in advance. Within a few hours, if not minutes, as if on cue, the media and then Western political figures began hurling accusations at Russia and its leadership, blaming them for the loss of life. What followed was merely a political spectacle. We are therefore not at all

surprised that the investigators ignored the Russian radar data made available to the Netherlands, along with documentation showing that the missile which hit the Boeing belonged to Ukraine and was launched from territory controlled by the Ukrainian Government.

Allow us to refresh the memory of those present that the Russian defence corporation Almaz-Antey, the manufacturer of the Buk anti-aircraft missile system, conducted live-fire 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 40 years of use of anti-aircraft missiles of this type. 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 mentioning here that, as pointed out by the lawyers of one of the defendants, even the Dutch public prosecution service 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” rested on dubious sources of information: the testimony of anonymous witnesses, social media, poor-quality photographs, certain audiovisual materials with clear signs of having been produced through montage, unsubstantiated data from the Ukrainian intelligence services, and investigations by some supposedly “independent” bloggers.

Moreover, during the investigation and then the trial, the key question was never clarified as to how on earth the Boeing on flight MH17 ended up flying over the zone of hostilities when the Ukrainian Government’s punitive operation against the population of Donbas was in full swing. Why did the Kyiv regime, which threw its military might, including combat aircraft, at the towns and cities of Donbas, not close the airspace to civil aviation at the same time?

Ukraine’s representatives, by the way, have yet to make available the data from their own radars, while the Government of the United States of America 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, and that persistent attempts are being made to conceal the truth of what happened. Who made the decision to sacrifice the lives of 298 passengers and crew so as to “inflict a strategic defeat on Russia”, as it later became fashionable to say? We will probably learn this at some point from the memoirs of Western politicians or intelligence service chiefs.

As for the purely legal side of things, we would remind you of another extremely important aspect. In late January, the International Court of Justice issued a final judgment on Ukraine’s lawsuit against Russia over the application of the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism. The Court rejected all – I emphasize – all of Ukraine’s claims regarding MH17 and many other episodes brought up by Ukraine, which the Kyiv regime tried to attribute to Russia as actions “supporting and financing terrorism”.

Among other things, the Court rejected politicized fabrications that the People’s Republics of Donetsk and Lugansk were some kind of “terrorist organizations”, thereby completely delegitimizing the Kyiv regime’s military operation against the population of these two republics. This operation has gone by different names at different times – “anti-terrorist operation”, “joint forces operation” – but the objectives have remained clear: to forcibly confirm the results of the February 2014 armed coup d’état in Kyiv, which was orchestrated, financed and organized from abroad, and to suppress the political views of those residents of what was then Ukraine who did not accept the results of the coup and came out in support of the Constitution and the expansion of local government powers.

For the time being, we can only note once again that, in the context of Russia's special military operation, a number of States are willing to embark on any steps, even the most inhumane ones, to create an anti-Russian information environment. This also includes the fake stories about Bucha, Irpin, Borodyanka, Kramatorsk, Mariupol and so on, all of which have been repeatedly debunked both by Russian experts and by Western journalists.

With regard to flight MH17, we reiterate that Russia has provided a huge amount of information that is of great importance for establishing the real causes of the crash. However, these facts were not taken into account in the investigation or by the District Court of The Hague. The approach chosen there was to promote and cater to a pre-prepared political agenda that intentionally ruled out the possibility of identifying the true perpetrators of the tragedy of flight MH17.

Thank you for your attention.