

Malaysian Airliner Crashes in East Ukraine near Russian border, over 280 People on Board

By [RT](#)

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A Malaysia Airlines' Boeing-777 with over 280 passengers on board has crashed in Ukraine, close to the border with Russia. Both Kiev and the opposition deny involvement in the incident.

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The head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine Anton Geraschenko said the plane carrying 280 passengers and 15 crew members fell.

Malaysian Airlines has confirmed that it has lost contact with the plane when it was flying over Ukrainian soil.

Malaysia Airlines has lost contact of MH17 from Amsterdam. The last known position was over Ukrainian airspace. More details to follow.

The passenger plane was expected to enter Russian airspace at 5:20pm local time, but never did, a Russian aviation industry source was cited by Reuters.

"The plane crashed 60km away from the border, the plane had an emergency beacon," ITAR-TASS cited its source.



A man works at putting out a fire at the site of a Malaysia Airlines Boeing 777 plane crash in the settlement of Grabovo in the Donetsk region, July 17, 2014.(Reuters / Maxim Zmeyev)

Residents have reported finding debris from a plane, which they say could belong to the Malaysian Boeing. They said that several dozen dead passengers have been found, RIA Novosti reports.

Groups that are fighting Kiev's forces in eastern Ukraine have rejected any involvement in the incident, as there are reports that the plane was shot down.

The Donetsk People's Republic claims its self-defense forces simply don't have such military equipment.

Donetsk People's Republic PM Aleksandr Boroday has called the incident a *"provocation by the Ukrainian military"*.

"We confirm that the plane crashed not far from Donetsk," Boroday said. *"Representatives*

of Donetsk People's Republic have headed to the scene of the plane search."

"Self-defense forces have no air-defense, which could target transport aircraft at that height," he told Interfax.

"We have only MANPADs (portable anti-aircraft missile complex) which hit targets at 3-4 kilometers," Sergey Kavtaradze, representative for Donetsk People's Republic PM, also told journalists.

Russia's military also says none of its military planes have been flying close to the Russia-Ukraine border on Thursday, RIA Novosti reported citing a military official.

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko has not ruled out that a Malaysian plane has been shot down.

"We don't rule out that this plane was shot down and stress that Ukrainian forces did not fulfill any actions targeting in the air," Poroshenko said. He added that an investigation commission will be launched.

At the same time, Anton Geraschenko said on his Facebook page that the plane was targeted from the air defense missile complex "Buk".

RIA Novosti is citing its source who said that Kiev indeed deployed "Buk" in the Donetsk region.

"According to the system of objective control, "Buk" division of the armed forces of Ukraine was relocated to Donetsk region on Wednesday. Now in Kharkov another division is being prepared," the source said.

The sources stressed that aircraft flying at an altitude of over 10 kilometers can only be targeted by C-300 class weapons or 'Buk'.

A source in Russia's federal air traffic agency Rosaviatsia has said that three days ago Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council closed the airspace over eastern Ukraine because of the so-called *"anti-terrorist operation"* that Kiev conducts in the region.

Earlier a representative of Donetsk People's Republic said that civil aviation planes could not fly over Donetsk and Lugansk regions. He added that all necessary traffic control and navigation equipment was damaged.

"Dispatching support of all passenger flights is being conducted from Kiev. How this plane could be there - is not clear," a representative of Donetsk People's Republic said.

The Boeing-777, whose maiden commercial flight was almost exactly two decades ago, had previously suffered ten serious incidents, according to the Aviation Safety Database.

The most notorious of these involved another route performed by the same company, Malaysia Airlines Flight 370, during which the US-made aircraft disappeared off the radars between Kuala Lumpur and Beijing, in March this year. Despite an international search effort costing tens of millions of dollars, the plane, the reasons for whose disappearance have still not been definitively established, has not yet been recovered.

Another widely-covered incident occurred last year, when Asiana Airlines Flight 214 pilot crashed into the seawall just short of the landing strip at San Francisco International Airport, prompting the fuselage to drag across the runway as it disintegrated in a fire. Three people died as a result of the incident – the first fatalities in the history of the model, which is regarded as very safe in the industry.

Currently, about 1200 modifications of Boeing-777 are operated worldwide.

“A Boeing-777 is an extremely reliable piece of machinery. Modern planes don’t just crash with no reason,” pilot and aviation expert Yury Karash told RT. *“Let us recall how a Ukrainian missile downed a Russian TU-154 aircraft ten years ago. I can’t completely exclude the possibility the Boeing-777 was also hit by a missile.”*

“I don’t know who could’ve shot it down. But I can allege that it most likely was the Ukrainian armed forces: simply because its military – anti-aircraft defense, in particular – are, unfortunately, unqualified. As judging by the overall state of the Ukrainian armed forces, insufficient attention has been paid to their training,” he added.

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