

Malaysia's Prime Minister Mahathir: Insufficient Evidence to Blame Russia for MH17 Crash over Eastern Ukraine

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Malaysia's Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad casts doubt on the controversial Dutch JIT investigation pertaining to the July 2014 crash of Malaysian Airlines MH17 over Eastern Ukraine.

In an interview with Sputnik News at the Vladivostok East Asia Economic Summit, Mahathir stated that there is insufficient evidence to blame Russia for the MH17 Malaysian Airlines crash.

According to PM Mahathir, some of the findings of the Dutch-led Joint Investigation Team (JIT) do not seem "quite right".

"Yes, that [Russia's guilt] is our doubt.... I am seeing this as an observer from the outside, and some of the findings made [by the JIT] did not sound to me and many people in Malaysia as being quite right"

"I am not doubting their truthfulness. But there are certain things that they claim — it is difficult for us to accept... Identifying the missile - yes. The area where it happened - that can be verified. But identifying the actual firing, by whom [it was performed], that would be very difficult in the usual circumstances" (Sputnik News, September 4, 2019)



Mahathir was visibly concerned with the political nature of the accusations directed against Russia.

Immediately after the MH17 plane crash on July 17 2014, prior to the conduct of a preliminary investigation, Secretary of State John Kerry and US Ambassador to the UN Samantha Power pointed their finger at Moscow without a shred of evidence. In turn, the allegations directed against Russia were used to justify the imposition of sweeping economic sanctions against the Russian Federation.

According to President Obama (hours after the tragedy):

"... the downing of MH17 should be "a wake-up call" to Europe to get serious

about confronting Russia over Ukraine after EU leaders have proved reluctant to impose tough sanctions.” (Telegraph, July 18, 2019)

The [Wall Street Journal](#) reports (July 18, 2014) that “Obama is getting his wish and Brussels is now weighing new sanctions”:

European governments, jolted by the downing of a passenger plane over eastern Ukraine that killed nearly 300 people, are contemplating a major expansion of sanctions on Russia as early as next week.

European Union leaders decided in recent days to expand the penalties to a broad new category of people and companies. But the apparent shooting down of a plane carrying more than 200 EU citizens has intensified a desire to act quickly and forcefully, including sanctions against oligarchs with ties to the Kremlin.

In Brussels, some diplomats described the incident as a game-changer. “It would have major consequences if it was certain it came from the rebels—major consequences,” said one official. (WSJ, July 18, 2014)

On July 22, 2014, The European Union decided to expand its sanctions blacklist against Moscow including Vladimir Putin’s inner circle.

EU foreign ministers decided to “draw up further broad measures including an arms embargo and financial restrictions on Russian businesses, ... following the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17.” ([Guardian](#), July 22, 2014)

Almost immediately after the incident, the US and its European allies claimed that Russia “Did it” without presenting any evidence that Russia was responsible for the tragedy. These allegations were used by Washington and Brussels as [a pretext to introduce sanctions against Moscow](#), while Russia repeatedly denied the accusations.

Mahathir Meets Putin on Sideline of Vladivostok Summit



It is unclear whether the issue of MH17 was discussed by Prime Minister Mahathir and Russia’s President Putin in a meeting behind closed doors on the sidelines of the Vladivostok Economic Summit.

“Dr. Mahathir Mohamad is not ruling out discussing the Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 shoot-down at his meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin...” .

“Well, if the matter is mentioned, then of course,” said the prime minister in an interview with the Sputnik news agency.

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