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MH17: Charging Individuals on the Basis of a Deeply Flawed Investigation. Placing the Blame on Russia

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Global Research, June 21, 2019

Region: Asia, Europe, Russia and FSU
Theme: Law and Justice, Media Disinformation
In-depth Report: UKRAINE REPORT

The International Movement for a Just World (JUST) and the Perdana Global Peace Foundation (PGPF) share Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's skepticism about Russia's alleged culpability in the shooting down of MH17 on the 17th of July 2014. The Dutch-led joint investigation team (JIT) has not produced any solid evidence to show that the four suspects it has named are guilty of the crime. Dr.Mahathir is right when he argues that from the very beginning there was a political script in place to put the blame upon Russia.

A number of independent investigators, apart from organisations such as JUST, PGPF and Global Research, had raised fundamental questions about the investigation since 2014. They had asked how the investigation could be credible when Ukraine was in the team because it was alleged that Ukraine was complicit in the attack on MH17. To make it worse, the four initial members of the JIT, namely, Australia, Belgium, Netherlands and Ukraine — Malaysia was deliberately excluded in the early stage of the investigation — came to an agreement on 8 August 2014 that the results of the investigation can only be announced if they have the consent of all four parties. Making unanimity among the four a condition in effect gave Ukraine an effective veto over the decision-making process.

We are also aware that throughout the investigation attempts to obtain independent verifiable data have not been successful. These include certified copies of communications between Ukrainian air traffic controllers and the flight crew on board the ill-fated airline and the Comma Separated Variable (CSV) file from the plane's flight data recorder. This lack of transparency had created serious doubts about the integrity of the investigation. It is alleged that as a result of the biased investigation high quality items of evidence available were not subjected to thorough analysis and evaluation.

There is perhaps an even bigger problem with the investigation. The JIT has not tried to link the tragedy with larger geopolitical concerns. The critical question of who benefitted from the massacre in the skies has not been accorded any attention. And yet it is obvious that the massacre was manipulated to not only demonize Russian President Vladimir Putin and thwart Russia's military and political re-assertion but also to intensify sanctions against Russia with the support of the United States' European allies. These allies such as Germany, France, Netherlands and Italy were somewhat reluctant to endorse the US drive to widen and deepen sanctions against Russia in the initial phase but after the July 17th massacre of innocent travellers the European mood changed dramatically.

The failure of the JIT to address these and other important issues pertaining to the actual

investigation and its geopolitical dimensions undermines its credibility. Arresting and charging individuals on the back such a lopsided investigation does not do justice to the families of the victims of the terrible tragedy. It does not guarantee closure.

In the name of the families of the victims and in the name of truth and justice, JUST and PGPF demand that a more honest and comprehensive investigation be carried out perhaps by a truly independent international panel.

Let us not sacrifice truth and justice at the altar of power and geopolitical machinations.

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