

Kerry Makes Most Explicit U.S. Case Against Russia Over Malaysia Jet Downing

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The  **Moscow Times**

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry on Sunday laid out what he said was overwhelming evidence of Russian complicity in the downing of a Malaysian airliner in eastern Ukraine as he made the U.S. case against Moscow in the most emphatic and explicit terms yet.

In a blitz of U.S. morning news shows, Kerry demanded that Russia take responsibility for actions of allied separatists suspected of shooting down the passenger plane and he expressed disgust over the rebels' "grotesque" mishandling of victims' bodies at the crash site.

Kerry also threatened "additional steps" against Moscow and called on European allies, who have lagged behind Washington in imposing sanctions over the Ukraine crisis, to take Thursday's tragedy as a "wake-up call" to take a tougher stand against Russia.

While stopping short of placing direct blame on Moscow for the shootdown, Kerry put forth

the most pointed and detailed U.S. accusations so far that Russia provided pro-Moscow insurgents with the sophisticated anti-aircraft systems used to down the aircraft.

Kerry said the U.S. had seen major supplies moving into Ukraine from Russia in the last month, including a 150-vehicle convoy of armored personnel carriers, tanks and rocket launchers transferred to the separatists several weeks ago.

"It is pretty clear that this is a system that was transferred from Russia," Kerry said in an interview on CNN.

Kerry said the U.S. intercepted conversations about the transfer to separatists of the Russian SA-11 radar-guided SA11 missile system it blames for the downing of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17.

U.S. authorities also have seen a video of a missile launcher — with a least one rocket missing from its battery — moving back into Russia from a rebel-held area, Kerry said.

"There is enormous amount of evidence, even more evidence that I just documented, that points to the involvement of Russia in providing these systems, training the people on them," Kerry said on CBS's "Face the Nation."

Moscow denies involvement and has accused the Ukrainian military in the shootdown that killed 298 people.

Kerry's remarks reflected Washington's growing anger with Russia over the crash, which is widely seen a potential turning point in the Ukraine crisis that has taken relations between Russia and the West to a post-Cold War low.

Pressure on Moscow

In appearances on a string of Sunday news shows, Kerry called on Moscow to publicly seek responsible action from the separatists in Ukraine, including access to the crash site.

"The separatist are in control," Kerry said on NBC's "Meet the Press" program. "It is clear that Russia supports the separatists, supplies the separatists, encourages the separatists, trains the separatists. And Russia needs to step up and make a difference here."

Kerry, who spoke to his Russian counterpart, Sergei Lavrov, in a phone call on Saturday, expressed outrage over the chaotic scenes in the aftermath of the crash.

He said foreign investigators have been given only limited access to the crash site, 75 minutes on Friday and three hours on Saturday, despite the fact that President Vladimir Putin had promised unfettered access.

"Drunken separatists have been piling bodies into trucks and removing them from the site," Kerry said on NBC. "What's happening is really grotesque and it is contrary to everything President Putin and Russia said they would do."

American lawmakers also called on Putin to take action, with Democratic Senator Dianne Feinstein saying on CNN, "Putin, you have to man up."

Kerry's sharpened charges against Moscow over the downing of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 also suggest that Washington could move faster to expand sanctions.

"The president is prepared to take additional steps," Kerry told Fox News. "We are discussing with the Ukrainians right now what they need, what else we can do, and I don't think anything except American troops going there, other things are on the table."

Kerry also challenged the Europeans to become assertive.

"It would help enormously if some countries in Europe that have been a little reluctant to move would now recognize this wake-up call and join the U.S. and President Obama in taking the lead, and also stepping up," he said.

See also:

[U.S. Officials Threaten 'Severe Consequences' for Russia Over Crash](https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2014/07/20/kerry-makes-most-explicit-us-case-against-russia-over-malaysia-jet-downing-a37494)

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