

Malaysia's Prime Minister Says Russia Being Made a Scapegoat for Downing of MH17

By [Reuters](#)

June 20, 2019



kremlin.ru

Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad said on Thursday that Russia is being made a scapegoat for the downing of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 and questioned the objectivity of the investigations into the 2014 disaster.

The international investigative team set up to probe the crash said on Wednesday three Russians and one Ukrainian will face murder charges for the deaths of 298 people aboard the flight that was shot down over eastern Ukraine.

"We are very unhappy, because from the very beginning it was a political issue on how to accuse Russia of the wrongdoing," Mahathir told reporters at a government event.

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"Even before they examine, they already said Russia. And now they said they have proof. It is very difficult for us to accept that."

MH17 was shot out of the sky on July 17, 2014, over territory held by pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine as it was flying from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur. Everyone on board was killed.

The Dutch-led international team named the four suspects as Russians Sergei Dubinsky, Oleg Pulatov and Igor Girkin, and Ukrainian Leonid Kharchenko. It said international arrest warrants for the four had been issued.

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Dutch Chief Prosecutor Fred Westerbeke said the suspects were believed to be responsible for bringing a Russian-made missile into eastern Ukraine "with the aim to shoot down an airplane."

Russia has said it regretted the crash investigation findings and called the murder charges against Russian suspects groundless.

Mahathir said he did not think the Russians were involved and that the investigative team's findings were based on "hearsay."

"I expect everybody to go for the truth," he said.

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