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Churkin: Ukraine Should Allow Access to MH17 Audio Files

By The Moscow Times

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Russia's Ambassador to the United Nations Vitaly Churkin speaks during meeting at United Nations headquarters in New York.

Russia's ambassador to the UN, Vitaly Churkin, has demanded Kiev give international investigators access to audio recordings from Flight MH17, continuing to blame Ukrainian officials for the Malaysia Airlines crash that killed hundreds in July.

"They [Ukraine] have to provide records of conversations between their air-traffic controllers [and pilots] to be able to understand why they sent the Malaysian plane into a conflict zone," Churkin was quoted as saying by the ITAR-Tass news agency.

Churkin made the demands Monday at a United Nations Security Council briefing on the causes of the crash. The UN's secretary general for political affairs, Jeffrey Feltman, is traveling to Kiev on Tuesday.

Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 was downed over eastern Ukraine on July 17, resulting in the loss of all 298 lives on board. Kiev has blamed separatists for downing the plane using weapons supplied from Russia, though Moscow has repeatedly denied the claims.

A preliminary report on the cause of the crash is expected to be presented to the members of the UN Security Council at the end of the month, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Oscar Fernandez-Taranco is reported to have said during the briefing.

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