

German Report Blames Pro-Russian Separatists for MH17 Crash in Ukraine

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Children's toys are seen in front of the wreckage at the site of the downed Malaysia Airlines flight MH17, near the village of Hrabove (Grabovo) in Donetsk region, eastern Ukraine.

Germany's BND foreign intelligence agency has concluded that pro-Russian rebels are to blame for the downing of Malaysia Airlines MH17 in Ukraine in July, Der Spiegel weekly reported on Sunday, the first European agency to say so.

The crash over rebel-held territory in eastern Ukraine on July 17 killed all 298 passengers and crew and led to a further deterioration of ties between the West and Moscow, who are in dispute over Russia's role in the Ukraine crisis.

Gerhard Schindler, president of the BND, told a secret parliamentary committee on security affairs earlier this month that separatists had used a Russian Buk missile defense system from a Ukrainian base to fire a rocket that exploded directly next to the Malaysia Airlines plane, Der Spiegel reported.

"It was pro-Russian separatists," the magazine quoted him as saying.

The BND concluded the rebels were to blame after a detailed analysis based on satellite and other photos, Der Spiegel said. No one at the BND was immediately available to comment.

Kiev blames the incident on the rebels and accused Moscow of arming them, but the rebels and Moscow deny the accusations.

European governments have so far refrained from openly pointing the finger, but shortly after the crash U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said there was strong evidence that Moscow-backed separatists had downed the plane.

The Dutch government, which has two investigations underway into the downing of the airliner, has yet to say who was responsible. Two thirds of the passengers were Dutch.

A preliminary report by the Dutch Safety Board last month said the airliner crashed due to a "large number of high-energy objects" from outside the aircraft. It drew no conclusions as to where they came from.

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