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Dutch MH17 Crash Investigators Want Access to Russian Intelligence Reports

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A piece of wreckage of the downed Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 is pictured near the village of Hrabove in the Donetsk region.

Dutch prosecutors are still awaiting U.S. and Russian intelligence reports on the crash of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17, the Dutch government said Tuesday.

The Dutch have the lead role in investigating the downing of the Boeing 777 aircraft, which crashed over rebel-held territory in eastern Ukraine in July with the loss of all 298 people aboard, two thirds of them Dutch.

With the crash site too dangerous to access due to fighting, they have been relying mostly on publicly available information to carry out a remote investigation.

The U.S. and Russian governments have both said who they believe was behind the aircraft's downing, each citing intelligence information that is not publicly available.

The United States said its satellite imagery proved it was shot down with a ground-to-air

missile by Russian-backed rebels. Russian says a Ukrainian military aircraft downed it.

"It is desirable for prosecutors to receive further information from the U.S. in connection with the criminal investigation," the government said in a letter to Parliament.

Lawmakers had asked whether the United States had provided imagery from the 10 minutes before and after the crash. Only the latter were referred to in an interim air crash inspection report published last month.

"In the American legal system it is juridically complicated to pass intelligence information to the criminal justice system," the letter said.

It added that the government was sure the information would come.

Prosecutors have also said they plan to ask Russian authorities for radar data supposedly in Russian possession that shows a Ukrainian fighter was in the vicinity of the airliner, German magazine Der Spiegel reported Monday.

Last month's interim report by the Dutch Safety Board, which investigates air crashes, said there were several civilian airliners flying nearby but no military aircraft that would have been capable of shooting it down.

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