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Russian Report Blames Kiev for Downing of MH17 — Newspaper

By The Moscow Times

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Investigators work near a sign reading "No entrance! There may be remains of the victims of flight MH17 crash at the territory" at the site of the Malaysia Airlines Boeing 777 plane crash near the village of Hrabove (Grabovo) in Donetsk region, April 16, 2015.

An independent Russian newspaper has published what it said was a report by Russian military engineers suggesting a Malaysian airliner shot down in Ukraine was hit by a Russian-made surface-to-air missile fired by Ukrainian forces.

Novaya Gazeta, an investigative newspaper, said Wednesday that the report did not prove whether Kiev's forces or the pro-Russian separatists they are fighting had shot down Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 on July 17 last year, killing all 298 people aboard.

But it said the report, the authenticity of which could not be independently verified, debunked one of the main theories put forward by the Russian government — that the airliner was shot down by a Ukrainian fighter jet.

Each side in the conflict in eastern Ukraine accuses the other of bringing down the plane, on which two-thirds of the victims were Dutch.

"It is most likely that Flight MH17 was destroyed in mid-air by the impact of a 9M38M1 surface-to-air missile ... the main missile in the 'BUK-M1' system," said the report published by Novaya Gazeta.

The report, which the newspaper published in full, said the military engineers' calculations, largely based on open sources, suggested the plane was fired on from a position where Ukrainian government forces' BUK missile systems were stationed.

Dutch prosecutors say the "leading scenario" in their investigation is that the plane was hit by a BUK missile and are testing the theory it was fired from a separatist-held area.

Russian officials, who initially said the plane was hit by a Ukrainian fighter jet, have deflected any blame and deny allegations by NATO and Kiev that Moscow has provided the rebels with heavy weapons and soldiers.

Novaya Gazeta, which is often critical of President Vladimir Putin, said it appeared the report had been drawn up by Moscow to send to the Dutch investigators.

"This report does not end things, it raises new doubts and new questions. The main ones are: where was the BUK-M1 fired from and who fired it?" the newspaper wrote.

Kiev has dismissed Russian allegations that its forces shot down the airliner. Russia's Defense Ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

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