The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

# Russia's Putin Voices Opposition to International Tribunal for MH17

By The Moscow Times

July 29, 2015



A separatist stands at the crash site of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17, near the settlement of Grabovo in the Donetsk region, July 18, 2014.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Wednesday he opposed the creation of an international tribunal to prosecute those who shot down a Malaysian airliner over eastern Ukraine, hours before a U.N. vote on such a proposal.

Putin's comment was the latest to indicate Russia may block moves at the United Nations, co-sponsored by the Netherlands, to set up a UN-backed tribunal into the downing of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 in July 2014.

Kiev and many Western countries accuse pro-Russian separatists in east Ukraine of shooting down the plane with a Russian-made missile, charges Moscow denies.

All 298 people on board, the majority of them Dutch, were killed and the Netherlands is

leading an international investigation into the incident.

"The Russian president confirmed the unchanging position that it is inexpedient to create such a judicial body," the Kremlin said in a statement following a phone call between Putin and Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte.

The Dutch, along with Malaysia, Australia and most Western countries, are pushing for the tribunal, which they say would have the authority to investigate impartially and demand the extradition of suspects, whichever country might be harboring them.

Russia has said setting up a tribunal before investigations are complete would risk further politicizing the incident. Putin also regretted that Russia's own draft resolution, which demands justice for the victims but does not establish a tribunal, did not win the U.N. Security Council's backing.

The Netherlands said in a statement that it believed a tribunal would be the best way of achieving impartial justice.

"In order to avoid the risk of politicizing justice, it is best to set up the tribunal before deciding what the circumstances of the crash were," the Dutch government said.

The downing of the plane triggered a new round of Western economic sanctions against Russia over the conflict in Ukraine, and deepened the worst stand-off between Moscow and the West since the Cold War ended.

More than 6,500 people have been killed in more than 15 months of fighting in east Ukraine between the rebels and forces loyal to Kiev.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2015/07/29/russias-putin-voices-opposition-to-international-tribunal-for-mh17-a48607