

# Key MH17 Suspect Ready to Testify in Eastern Ukraine, Lawyer Says

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Alexander Ermochenko / Xinhua / ZUMA Wire / TASS

Key MH17 witness Vladimir Tsemakh is ready to provide testimony to Dutch and Ukrainian investigators about the plane tragedy, but only on pro-Russian separatist territory in eastern Ukraine, his lawyer has said.

Tsemakh, who was captured by Ukrainian forces and later returned to Russia for fighting on the side of pro-Russian rebels in the Donbass, had been filmed saying that he commanded an anti-air brigade and hid evidence of a Buk missile system. Observers [speculated](#) that he may be a key witness in the July 2014 downing of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 over eastern Ukraine that killed all 298 people onboard.

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Anatoly Kucherena, Tsemakh's lawyer in his European human rights court lawsuit against Ukraine and the Netherlands, [told](#) the state-run TASS news agency that his client is "scared"

of testifying, but is ready to do it nevertheless.

“He takes everything that has happened to him pretty hard, but he’s still ready to give evidence to both Dutch and Ukrainian investigators to protect his good name,” Kucherena was quoted as saying Thursday.

“He agrees to do this only on DPR territory,” Kucherena clarified, referring to the Donetsk People’s Republic, one of two self-proclaimed proto-states in the Donbass region of eastern Ukraine. Tsemakh is currently believed to be residing in eastern Ukrainian territory controlled by pro-Russian rebels.

No one has yet approached Tsemakh to offer the “various interrogation formats,” the lawyer who also represents American whistleblower Edward Snowden said.

“My client and I voiced our principled willingness to testify. Everything else is subject to negotiations,” TASS quoted Kucherena as saying.

Ukrainian security services kidnapped Tsemakh, a Ukrainian citizen, on June 27. In September, Tsemakh was [sent](#) to Russia as part of a high-profile prisoner swap between Kiev and Moscow.

In his first interview since the prisoner exchange, Tsemakh [said](#) last week that Dutch and Australian officials had offered him Dutch citizenship and a house in the Netherlands while he was held in Ukraine.

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