

Russia Pulls Out of MH17 Talks With Australia, Netherlands

October 15, 2020



Moscow said the Dutch government's move to take Russia to Europe's human rights court over MH17 made trilateral talks "meaningless." **Mikhail Pochuyev / TASS**

Russia has withdrawn from talks with Australia and the Netherlands launched nearly two years ago to establish responsibility for the 2014 downing of Malaysian Airlines Flight 17, Russia's Foreign Ministry [said](#) Thursday.

Moscow said the Dutch government's "[unfriendly](#)" move this summer to take Russia to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) for its role in the MH17 downing made the trilateral talks "meaningless."

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"The responsibility for the breakdown of the trilateral consultations thus rests entirely with The Hague," the Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

All 298 people, including 193 Dutch and 27 Australian nationals, aboard MH17 were killed when their plane was shot down over territory held by pro-Russian rebels in eastern Ukraine. Dutch prosecutors and international investigators say a Russian-made missile brought from across the border in western Russia was responsible for the downing.

Russia denies the allegations that it was involved in shooting down MH17.

In Thursday's statement, the ministry called the years-long, Dutch-led investigation "biased, superficial and politicized" and accused Australia and the Netherlands of "trying to get Russia to admit guilt and receiving compensation for victims' relatives."

Russia said it held three overall rounds of talks with Australian and Dutch officials; the sides [met](#) for the first time sometime in early 2019 but declined to disclose details, citing confidentiality.

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte said Russia's decision to pull out of the intergovernmental talks surprised him and Foreign Minister Stef Blok said the Netherlands regrets Moscow's decision.

"This is painful for the next of kin," Reuters quoted Rutte as saying.

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