

MH17 Suspect Denies Seeing Deadly Missile

By [AFP](#)

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Flight MH17 was shot down over territory controlled by Russian-backed separatists in Ukraine in July 2014, killing all 298 people on board. **Mikhail Pochuyev / TASS**

A Russian suspect in the crash of flight MH17 saw no sign of the missile allegedly used to shoot down the plane, he said in a video played Tuesday at his trial.

Oleg Pulatov is one of four men being tried in absentia by a Dutch court over the loss of the Malaysia Airlines jet, which was travelling from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur when it was downed over eastern Ukraine on July 17, 2014.

Investigators say a Soviet-era BUK missile fired by pro-Russian rebels was used to hit the airliner, which crashed with the loss of all 298 people on board, including 196 Dutch nationals.

"No I haven't seen a BUK missile and I can also say for sure there was certainly no BUK seen,"

Pulatov, the only suspect to be represented by defence lawyers, said in a video message.

"No BUK or any commands related to a BUK were mentioned" during meetings he had with other rebels on the day of the crash, he said.

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The first he heard about the crash was when his soldiers "told me about the latest news, that a plane got crashed near Donetsk", he said in the message played to the court near Schiphol airport, where the doomed plane took off.

"My people from there told me that they were intercepting a lot of calls where they heard that there were literally bodies and corpses of people falling from the sky," he added.

The four suspects — Russian nationals Pulatov, Igor Girkin and Sergei Dubinsky, and Ukrainian citizen Leonid Kharchenko — are all accused of being key figures among the separatist rebels battling Kiev.

Pulatov was an ex-Russian special forces soldier and one of Dubinsky's deputies who allegedly helped transport the missile system to Ukraine from its base in Russia.

Investigators say they are still trying to track the crew of the BUK, which was from the Russian army's 53rd Anti-Aircraft Missile Brigade based in the city of Kursk.

The trial, which began in March, is still hearing defence submissions concerning evidence.

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