

Australia, Netherlands Launch New Legal Action Over MH17

By [AFP](#)

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Dutch Foreign Minister Wopke Hoekstra (L) and Mark Harbers (R), Dutch Minister of Infrastructure and Water Management, give a press conference about the downing of flight MH17 in 2014 in The Hague on March 14. **Bart Maat / ANP / AFP**

Australia and the Netherlands launched fresh legal proceedings against Russia Monday over the 2014 downing of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17, saying Moscow's invasion of Ukraine called for urgent accountability.

The joint action was filed with the UN's civil aviation body, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and comes over two weeks into the war in Ukraine.

The two countries hope the ICAO will determine that Russia violated international conventions by firing a missile on a civilian aircraft.

"Russia's unprovoked and unjustified invasion of Ukraine and the escalation of its aggression

underscores the need to continue our enduring efforts to hold Russia to account," the Australian government said in a statement.

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Dutch Foreign Minister Wopke Hoekstra echoed the pressing need for action, adding "we cannot and will not allow the death of 298 people, including 196 Dutch nationals, to go unanswered."

Ill-fated flight MH17 was shot down over war-torn Ukraine on July 17, 2014, killing everyone on board.

International investigators say it was downed by a surface-to-air missile originally brought from a Russian military base as it flew over eastern Ukraine's Donetsk region held by pro-Moscow separatists.

Russia denies any responsibility for the mid-air destruction.

Four men have been charged in The Netherlands over the plane's downing, and are being tried near Schiphol airport, where the flight took off from.

The suspects – Russian nationals Igor Girkin, Sergei Dubinsky and Oleg Pulatov, and Ukrainian citizen Leonid Kharchenko – have all refused to attend the trial in the Netherlands.

The ICAO is a UN agency responsible for rules governing civilian international air transport.

The legal action lodged Monday is independent from the Dutch trial.

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