

# Why is Malaysia not part of the MH17 investigation?

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*Has Malaysia been left out of the Joint Investigation Team (JIT) probing the MH17 crash because the country would not point fingers at Russia, asks the International Movement for a Just World (JUST) today.*

Its president, prominent Malaysian scholar Dr Chandra Muzaffar, said it was logical and sensible for Malaysia to be part of the investigation since national carrier Malaysia Airlines (MAS) owned the downed aircraft.

In an article on the Centre for Research on Globalisation website dated November 24, he wrote that Malaysia had more rights to be in the JIT than some of its present members, and expressed hopes that a resolution endorsing a demand to be included in the team be adopted at the ongoing Umno general assembly.

“One can understand why Ukraine is in the team since that is where the plane was shot from the sky. We can understand the Netherlands’s membership of the JIT since the flight originated from Amsterdam.

“But why is Belgium in the JIT? Is it because Brussels is the administrative capital of the European Union and the EU may have some aviation responsibilities over commercial flights in the continent?

“If that is the case, then it is the EU, not Belgium, which should have a place in the team,” he wrote.

Chandra said if Australia was in the JIT because a large number of Australians were killed in that tragedy, Malaysia should also be in the team as it lost 43 citizens on board – the second largest number of casualties after 193 Dutch nationals.

He said the United States should perhaps be a member of the investigation team since Boeing, an American multinational, manufactured the 777 passenger jet.

MH17, which was flying from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur, crashed in rebel-held eastern Ukraine after it was shot by an air-to-surface missile on July 17. All 298 passengers and crew members were killed.

Chandra said it had been alleged that Malaysia was left out because the country, unlike the four JIT members, would not point a finger at Russia as the cause of the MH17 disaster.

He said Malaysia would not blame Russia or pro-Russian rebels in eastern Ukraine or anybody else “without hard, incontrovertible evidence”.

“Neither Ukraine nor the US Administration has been able to offer such evidence to the public. Comprehensive military data from satellite images of the incident would have convinced a lot of people.

“Instead, right from the outset, Ukraine, the US and a number of their allies have constructed a narrative about how pro-Russia rebels in Eastern Ukraine shot down MH 17 with a BUK system supplied by Russia,” he said.

The narrative, Chandra said, had been widely disseminated through a biased global media that raised no questions about the motives behind the action or who would have benefitted from it.

He said the anger generated by the “mass murder in the skies” especially in Europe had enabled certain parties to expand and reinforce their economic sanctions against Russia.

In such a situation, he said it was “absolutely right” for Malaysia to adopt a principled position on MH17 which refrained from condemning any party until all the investigations have been completed.

“This is why we are insisting upon total access to the crash site to enable investigators to collect all relevant evidence.

“Malaysia is also demanding that it be given a seat in the JIT. It is a demand that undoubtedly has the support of the entire nation,” he said, adding that Umno, the backbone of the Malaysian government, could adopt a resolution endorsing this demand at its general assembly that ends this Saturday.

Chandra said the Malaysian parliament, which is also in session, should lend its weight to a demand, which was at the heart of our integrity and sovereignty as a nation.

“It is just not only because MH17 is ours. It is just because we have a fair and balanced approach to the tragedy and its probe. We want the entire truth to be known.

“Our participation in the investigation will at least help to check any attempt to conceal or camouflage the real story behind one of the most heinous crimes in recent times,” he added.

Efforts to recover the plane’s wreckage and debris from the crash site were recently completed.

It was reported that the wreckage and debris were sent by train to Kharkiv, accompanied by Dutch police and observers from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

The train also carried the remains of some victims. It was reported that the wreckage and remains would be sent to the Netherlands from Kharkiv.

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