



19 July 2014

**MH17 PRESS BRIEFING BY LIOW TIONG LAI,
MINISTER OF TRANSPORT**

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

Today Malaysia Airlines have released the final list of nationalities on board flight MH17. Each of the numbers represents a life lost, and a family in anguish. After this press conference, Malaysia Airlines will release the full passenger manifest.

Malaysia mourns the loss of all 298 passengers and crew. We feel for their families. And we promise to do all we can to ensure that the investigation is completed, and that justice is done.

ON THE INVESTIGATION:

Malaysia is deeply concerned that the crash site has not been properly secured. The integrity of the site has been compromised, and there are indications that vital evidence has not been preserved in place.

Interfering with the scene of the crash risks undermining the investigation itself. Any actions that prevent us from learning the truth about what happened to MH17 cannot be tolerated. Failure to stop such interference would be a betrayal of the lives that were lost.

Malaysia calls for all parties to protect the integrity of the crash site, and to allow the investigation to proceed. We urge all those involved to respect the families, and the nations who have lost their sons and daughters in this attack.

Yes, MH17 has become a geopolitical issue. But we must not forget that it is a human tragedy. Days after the plane went down, the remains of 298 people lie uncovered.

Citizens of eleven nations – none of whom are involved in the conflict in Eastern Ukraine –cannot be laid to rest. Their lives were taken by violence; now violence stops them being accorded their final respect. This cannot continue.

ON DEPLOYMENT:

Earlier today, Malaysia's special team arrived in Kiev. We ask for continued support from the Ukrainian government, and the other parties involved, as the team seeks to assist the Ukrainian authorities in recovering and identifying the remains of the passengers and crew, and with the wider investigation.

The world has a moral obligation to ensure that the remains of all victims are recovered and treated with respect. We will play our part in fulfilling this obligation. That is why, later today, I will join the Malaysian team in Kiev, where I will work with my counterpart in the Ukraine government, to support efforts to retrieve the remains, and to assist with the investigation.

I will be joined by the Director General of the Department of Civil Aviation, the Malaysian investigator in charge, and the Chairman of Malaysia Airlines. The CEO of Malaysia Airlines is already in Kiev.

ON THE FLIGHT PATH:

On the matter of MH17's flight path, I would like to refer to recent reported comments by officials from Eurocontrol, the body which approves European flight paths under ICAO rules.

According to the Wall Street Journal, the officials stated that some 400 commercial flights, including 150 international flights crossed eastern Ukraine daily before the crash. Officials from Eurocontrol also stated that in the two days before the incident, 75 different airlines flew the same route as MH17.

MH17's flight path was a busy major airway, like a highway in the sky. It followed a route which was set out by the international aviation authorities, approved by Eurocontrol, and used by hundreds of other aircraft. It flew at an altitude set, and deemed safe, by the local air traffic control. And it never strayed into restricted airspace.

The flight and its operators followed the rules. But on the ground, the rules of war were broken. In an unacceptable act of aggression, it appears that MH17 was shot down; its passengers and crew killed by a missile.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This outrage cannot go unpunished. Once again, Malaysia condemns this brutal act of aggression, and calls for those responsible to be found, and to face the full force of justice without delay.

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