
RUSSIA AND VLADIMIR PUTIN SUED OVER DOWNING OF MH17 OVER UKRAINE

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Relatives of victims of the Malaysian airliner shot down over Ukraine in July 2014 are suing Russia and President Vladimir Putin over their alleged involvement in the incident.

LHD, an Australian law firm, said on Monday it had filed a lawsuit at the European Court of Human Rights seeking damages of \$10m per passenger in relation to the downing of the jet in pro-Russian rebel-held territory, which killed all 298 passengers on board.

We have submitted almost 2,000 pages of documentary evidence which indicate that Russians were present, Russian heavy military equipment was present, it was photographed, witnessed, videoed and geo-located to the area where the missile was fired from, said Jerry Skinner, special counsel with LHD.

Mr Skinner told Australian radio the lawsuit was filed on behalf of 33 next of kin of seven families from Australia, New Zealand and Malaysia. He said the action was intended to be a deterrent or punishment for undesirable conduct, which he alleges was perpetrated by Russia and Mr Putin.

The shooting down of flight MH17 during a conflict between Ukrainian forces and Russian-backed rebels prompted the UN to issue a resolution condemning the tragic loss of lives and calling for an independent investigation. Two-thirds of the 298 victims on the flight between Amsterdam and Kuala Lumpur were Dutch, with the remainder coming from Australia, Malaysia and several other nations.

The Dutch safety board concluded in a report last year that the aircraft was brought down by a Russian-made surface-to-air Buk missile but did not say who fired it.

Ukraine and western experts have blamed Russian-backed rebels for firing the missile but this has

been rejected by Russia, which has blamed Ukrainian forces.

Mr Skinner, who previously worked on compensation claims lodged by families against Libya following the Lockerbie disaster, said it was clear that without Mr Putins permission a Buk missile would never have crossed the border into Ukraine.

That doesnt simply happen in Russia unless it is cleared all the way to the top, he said.

A Russian spokesman said on Sunday the country did not yet have any information about the compensation claim.

Last year Russia vetoed a UN resolution that sought to establish an independent tribunal for the purpose of prosecuting people responsible for downing MH17. An investigation by Dutch criminal prosecutors has yet to conclude.

Moscows refusal to back a UN investigation stands in contrast to its pursuit of those responsible for a terrorist attack on an Egyptian jet in October that killed 224 people, mainly Russian holidaymakers. Russia has offered \$50m for information leading to the capture of those responsible.

Kaynak/Source: