

First MH17 Crash Report 'in Weeks': Dutch Investigators

---

11/08/2014



There were 193 Dutch citizens aboard the Malaysia Airlines 777 when it exploded over strife-torn eastern Ukraine on July 17 and the Dutch are in charge of victim identification and probing the cause of the disaster.

The West has accused pro-Russian separatists of shooting down the jet with a missile supplied by Russia. Moscow has accused Ukraine of shooting it down.

"We have sufficient information to compile a preliminary report," said Wim van der Weegen, spokesman for the Dutch Safety Board (OVV).

"We hope that it will be ready in a few weeks," he told AFP, announcing that international crash investigators had now returned to the Netherlands without visiting the crash site.

"In order to analyse the information... it's not essential to remain in Ukraine," Van der Weegen told AFP, saying the team will now be based in The Hague.

Ukrainian air crash experts, who are taking part in the international probe, had been at the crash site shortly after the crash, before the Dutch were tasked with leading the investigation, Van der Weegen said.

The deteriorating security situation prevented crash investigators under the OVV's leadership from reaching the remote site, although Dutch, Australian and Malaysian forensic experts did reach the area to look for body parts and personal belongings.

"Since we've taken over the investigation, there has been no new opportunity to get to the crash site," Van der Weegen said.

The OVV said in a statement that it was only investigating what brought down flight MH17, not who was responsible.

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte last Wednesday called off the search for body parts as a result of escalating fighting between Kiev and pro-Russian separatists.

Van der Weegen said enough sources were available including cockpit voice recorders, flight data recorders (black boxes), radar details and information from air traffic controllers.

"We have enough information (for a preliminary report), but we would like to return to the crash site to verify some of our findings and get additional information," he said.

---