



United States Mission to the OSCE

Ongoing Violations of OSCE Principles and Commitments by the Russian Federation and the Situation in Ukraine

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
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One week ago, we all received the devastating news of the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17. As victims' loved ones continue to mourn, we are learning more about the many lives that were lost—men, women, children, and infants who were killed senselessly as they were heading on vacation, returning home from their studies abroad, conducting research, visiting family and friends, or doing their jobs as the flight crew. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families around the world who are experiencing this unimaginable grief.

Mr. Chairperson, as the world mourns this horrific loss, our immediate focus is on recovering those who were lost, investigating the facts, and bringing those responsible to justice. As we have previously stated, the victims of this tragedy and their families deserve a credible international investigation that reveals the truth about what happened. We understand that international investigators are on the ground in Ukraine attempting to conduct a full, unimpeded and transparent investigation. Yet, we have been horrified by reports of looting, evidence tampering, and the failure to transport the remains of all victims to Kharkiv and into Dutch custody. This kind of behavior has no place in the community of nations and is an insult to the memory of the victims. We call for investigators to have full and unfettered access to the crash site, and for the crash site to be properly cordoned off and preserved.

Mr. Chairperson, allow me to highlight what we know at this point:

- All evidence we have suggests that Flight MH17 was likely downed by a SA-11 surface-to-air missile from separatist-controlled territory in eastern Ukraine.
- Over the past month, we have detected an increasing amount of heavy weaponry crossing the border from Russia into Ukraine. This has not changed since Flight MH17 was downed. Last weekend, Russia sent a convoy of military equipment to the separatists of up to 150 vehicles that included tanks, armored personnel carriers, artillery, and multiple rocket launchers.
- Russia-backed separatist fighters have demonstrated proficiency with surface-to-air missile systems and have downed more than a dozen aircraft over the past few months, including two large transport aircraft. On Wednesday July 23, there were reports of two more downed Ukrainian fighter jets near the Russian border.
- At the time that MH17 dropped out of contact, we detected a surface-to-air missile (SAM) launch from a separatist-controlled area in southeastern Ukraine. We have reason to believe this missile was an SA-11.
- Intercepts of separatist communications posted on YouTube by the Ukrainian government indicate the separatists were in possession of an SA-11 system as early as

July 14th. In the intercepts, the separatists made repeated references to having and repositioning Buk (SA-11) systems.

- Social media postings on July 17, show an SA-11 system traveling through the separatist-controlled towns of Torez and Snizhne, near the crash site and assessed location of the SAM launch. From this location, the SA-11 has the range and altitude capability to have shot down flight MH17.
- Shortly after the crash, separatists – including the self-proclaimed “Defense Minister” of the group calling itself the Donetsk People’s Republic, Igor Strelkov, a Russian citizen – claimed responsibility for shooting down a military transport plane on social media.
- In an intercepted conversation that has been widely posted on the Internet, a known-separatist leader tells another person that a separatist faction downed an aircraft. When it became evident that the plane was a civilian airliner, separatists deleted social media posts boasting about shooting down a plane and possessing a Buk (SA-11) system.
- Video posted on social media shows a SA-11 on a transporter traveling through the Krasnodon and back to Russia. The video indicated the system was missing at least one missile, suggesting it had conducted a launch.

Mr. Chairperson, Russia has direct, substantial influence over the separatists. Russia has urged them on. Russia has trained them. Russia has given them military equipment and weapons, including anti-aircraft weapons. Russia has given them cash. Key separatist leaders are Russian citizens. The burden is on Russia to insist that these separatists stop tampering with the evidence, grant investigators full and unimpeded access to the crash site, and allow for the site to be properly cordoned off and preserved. Time is of the essence. We call on Russia to allow the world to find answers to what happened and to allow the families to lay their loved ones to rest with dignity. In addition, should Russia continue backing these violent separatists and continue violating Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity by occupying Crimea, Russia will further isolate itself from the international community. We remind the Permanent Council that we do not and will not recognize Russia’s attempted annexation of Crimea.

In closing I’d like to say that in the last few days there has been extensive media coverage of artillery fire coming from Russian territory into Ukraine. We heard the report today from the distinguished Ukrainian ambassador. There was also a social media posting with a Russian soldier bragging about how he had been “pounding Ukrainians all night” that was later taken down, presumably when it was realized that it would be incriminating.

Nothing we have seen suggests any reason to doubt that there is artillery fire coming from the Russian Federation’s territory into Ukraine.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.