

# MH17 CRASH FEW FACTS YOU MAY WANT TO KNOW



**WAS THE PLANE SHOT DOWN?**  
All evidence so far says yes. According to a senior American official, a US radar system saw a surface-to-air missile system turn on and track an aircraft right before plane went down. A second system saw a heat signature, which would indicate a missile rising from the ground into the air at the time the airliner was hit, the official explained. The plane's debris field indicates a mid-air explosion.



Journalists wait to visit the site of the crash.

**WHO DID IT?**  
That is the million dollar question. A preliminary classified US intelligence analysis concludes the rebels most likely fired the missile, according to an American defense official with direct access to the latest information. Ukrainian officials also accused the rebels, who denied it. Russia also denied involvement.

**CAN ANYONE FIRE A BUK MISSILE?**  
No. The system requires a trained team to properly fix on a target and fire the missile that is longer than an average car. US President Obama noted the rebels get weapons and training from Russia and had previously shot down government aircraft, including a claimed strike of a fighter jet.



A relative of a victim of MH17 crash.

**WHERE ARE THE BLACK BOXES NOW?**  
That is not clear. Some reports say separatist forces found the plane's data and cockpit voice recorders and handed them over to Russia, though that remains unproven. A Ukrainian official said Friday the recorders still were in the country, but he didn't know their exact location or who had them. On Saturday, a rebel leader in the Donetsk region where the plane went down said his group didn't have them. Examining the recorders will be key, but CNN aviation analyst Miles O'Brien said the crash location in such a volatile region made their recovery uncertain.

**HOW WILL THE US AND ITS ALLIES RESPOND?**

Nations who had citizens die in the attack has demanded a full investigation, as well as the normal response to any air tragedy such as return of remains and reparations for family of victims. Countries with particular expertise, such as the United States, also will participate in the investigation. Some US conservatives, such as Republican Sen John McCain, already call for tougher sanctions and arming the Ukraine military in its fight against the rebels. Tougher sanctions as well as a military conflict are, though distant, are on the cards.



## PROTEST FOR GAZA

Protesters display placards and banners as they take part in demonstration against Israeli atrocities in Gaza in central London, yesterday. *Top right*, Protesters run away from tear gas as they clash with riot police in Paris in the aftermath of a demonstration, *bottom right*, banned by French police, to show their support for the Palestinian people. Thousands of protesters gathered in London, Paris and other major cities around the world calling for an end to Israeli military action in Gaza that killed 342 people so far.



PHOTO: AFP

# US must act now

Pressure mounts on Obama over Ukraine crisis

**AGENCIES**  
US lawmakers demanded Friday that President Barack Obama show strong leadership and take swift action against Moscow in response to the downing of a passenger jet over Ukrainian territory.

Obama accused the Kremlin of fomenting violence in eastern Ukraine and providing pro-Russian separatists with "sophisticated equipment" such as the surface-to-air missile used to shoot down the Malaysia Airlines plane, but he stopped short of accusing Russia of direct involvement in Thursday's attack, which killed all 298 people aboard.

As the administration weighs what to do, lawmakers have been urging Obama to get tough -- not just on the plane disaster but in the broader Ukraine crisis, ongoing nuclear negotiations with Iran and Israel-Gaza violence.

"We need more leadership from the president," Republican congressman Peter King told MSNBC television.

"It's important for the president to step up today and mobilize Western support as far as economic sanctions" on Russia, he added on CNN.

Senator John McCain said that while a full investigation has yet to be conducted, Russian culpability was clear. He said Washington should deliver a multi-pronged response in the form of military assistance to Ukraine, "true sectoral sanctions on key Russian industries," a boosted Nato military presence in eastern Europe, and exposure of Russian human rights abusers and corrupt officials.

Earlier, McCain had blasted the Obama administration as "cowardly". Adam Kinzinger, a Republican on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, told Fox News that Obama needs to be "very clear-eyed" about the Russian threat and "call Putin out by name."

"I hope President Obama shows the same moral leadership today that President (Ronald) Reagan showed in 1983," Kinzinger said, referring to Reagan's blistering speech four days after a Soviet fighter jet shot down a Korean Airlines passenger plane that strayed into Soviet airspace.

"Putin has not been challenged as he should be," added House Republican Robert Pittenger on Twitter.



# Plane tragedy creates dilemma for Putin

THE GUARDIAN ONLINE

The shooting down of Malaysia Airlines flight 17 has confronted Vladimir Putin with a dilemma he had sought to avoid: to continue to support the separatist insurgency in Ukraine in the face of a storm of international outrage, or cut the rebels off and allow them to be defeated by the government in Kiev.

Until the plane was hit by an anti-aircraft missile on Thursday, killing nearly 300 people, the Russian president had tried to hedge his bets according to circumstances on the battlefield and western pressure. He moved troops and tanks away from the border after the Ukrainian presidential elections in May, but moved them back in recent weeks.

Similarly, he initially appeared to distance himself from the rebels until Ukrainian forces under the newly elected president, Petro Poroshenko, made significant gains in the east, triggering a new supply of Russian equipment over the border, including anti-aircraft missiles.

The MH17 disaster forces his hand. Anything he does now will attract much more scrutiny. Arms shipments across the very porous Ukrainian border, which had until now been a threat to the Ukrainian armed forces, will henceforward be seen as a direct threat to the international community and a trigger for global outrage. But pulling the plug on the separatists would leave them vulnerable to Ukrainian forces, which can be expected to seize the opportunity to crush the revolt, handing a strategic defeat to Putin.

It is already clear from Friday's UN security council meeting that if the rebels are found to have carried out the outrage with a Russian weapon, Moscow will find itself more isolated than at any time in its recent history.

## NEWS IN brief

**Modi gets notice for polls code violation**  
IANS, Lucknow

The Allahabad High Court has issued a notice to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi after a petition was filed accusing him of electoral malpractices in the Lok Sabha election. In the petition filed before the bench of Justice VK Shukla, Congress candidate Ajay Rai, who lost the Lok Sabha polls against Modi in Varanasi, has alleged that Modi as a candidate had over-spent during the election campaign.

**US drone strike kills 11 in Pakistan**  
AFP, Miranshah

A US drone strike targeting a Pakistani Taliban compound yesterday killed eleven insurgents in the country's restive northwestern tribal region near the border with Afghanistan, officials said. The attack came in North Waziristan, where for the past month the Pakistani military has been fighting to wipe out long-standing bases of Taliban and other militants.

**Typhoon Rammasun kills eight in China**  
AFP, Beijing

The strongest storm to hit southern China in more than 40 years has killed at least eight people there, state media said yesterday, after causing devastation in the Philippines. Rammasun first made landfall in China on Friday afternoon as super typhoon, packing winds exceeding 200 kilometres an hour and leaving five dead and 99 injured in Hainan province, Xinhua reported.

## Malaysian Airlines offers compensation

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Malaysia Airlines has offered a full refund to any passenger booked to fly with the airline before the end of the year -- so long as they apply by next Thursday, 24 July.

In its latest statement on the MH17 tragedy, the carrier says: "Passengers who wish to postpone or cancel their travel plans can obtain a refund, including for non-refundable tickets."

Travellers can also amend departure dates without charge. Starting next Friday, it's Amsterdam-KL daily departure will be changed from MH17 to MH19. Airlines "retire" flight numbers that become shorthand for tragedy.

# Iran nuke deadline extended

AFP, Vienna

Marathon talks between Iran and world powers in Vienna ended yesterday after negotiators gave themselves four more months to try and bridge major gaps and strike a historic nuclear deal.

New rounds of talks were expected in the coming weeks, with the date and place yet to be decided, diplomats said.

"While we have made tangible progress on some of the issues and have worked together on a text (for a deal)... there are still significant gaps on some core issues," lead negotiator and EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton told journalists in the early hours of Saturday.

The talks will now continue until November 24, she added.

Under the terms of the extension, the United States said it would unblock some \$2.8 billion (2.1 billion euros) in frozen funds, in return for Iran converting a quarter of its 20-percent enriched uranium stocks -- which can be used to make a bomb -- into fuel.

American officials left Vienna with the aim of resuming talks, perhaps at expert level, in August. The UN general



Catherine Ashton Javad Zarif

assembly in September is also expected to provide a "fulcrum" for the next phase of negotiations, one US administration official said.

In a statement repeated in Farsi by Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, Ashton said the parties would "reconcile in the coming weeks... with the clear determination to reach agreement... at the earliest possible moment".

Last November, Iran and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany agreed an interim deal under which the Islamic republic froze certain nuclear activities for six months in return for some sanctions relief.

But they gave themselves the option of pushing back the July 20 deadline if they failed to transform the interim deal into a lasting accord in that time.

US Secretary of State John Kerry, who this week spent two days in Vienna trying to broker a breakthrough, said Friday the "short extension" was "warranted by the progress we've made and the path forward we can envision".

"To turn our back prematurely on diplomatic efforts when significant progress has been made would deny ourselves the ability to achieve our objectives peacefully," Kerry said.

# Mahatma Gandhi was a casteist: Arundhati

THE GUARDIAN ONLINE

Arundhati Roy, the Booker prize winning author, has accused Mahatma Gandhi of discrimination and called for institutions bearing his name to be renamed.

Speaking at Kerala University in the southern Indian city of Thiruvananthapuram, Roy, 52, described the generally accepted image of Gandhi as a lie.

"It is time to unveil a few truths about a person whose doctrine of nonviolence was based on the acceptance of a most brutal social hierarchy ever known, the caste system... Do we really need to name our universities after him?" Roy said.

The author's comments provoked immediate outrage from descendants and some scepticism from historians.

"Being outspoken is one thing but being so biased about your ignorance is quite another," said Tushar Gandhi, great-grandson of the world-renowned thinker and activist. "It's just an attempt to get publicity."

Prof Mridula Mukherjee, an expert in modern Indian history at Jawaharlal University in Delhi, said Roy's criticism was misplaced. "Gandhi devoted much of his life to fighting caste prejudice. He was a reformer not a revivalist within the Hindu religion. His effort was in keeping with his philosophy of nonviolence and bringing social transformation without creating hatred," Mukherjee said.

Roy's comments come amid a series of rows over the study and representation of Indian history.

The Bharatiya Janata party (BJP), led by Narendra Modi, won a landslide victory in May, ending a decade of rule by the centre-left Congress party. When last in power, between 1998 and 2004, the BJP prompted controversy with its criticism of prominent historians and efforts to excise what ministers claimed was a Marxist or western vision from textbooks.



# Iraq, Syria bear the brunt of jihadists

Christians flee for their lives in Mosul; 270 Assad forces killed in Syria

AFP, Kirkuk

Hundreds of Christian families abandoned homes in Mosul to jihadist gunmen yesterday as they fled an ultimatum threatening their community's centuries-old presence in the northern Iraqi city as more atrocities are reported in Syria.

An AFP correspondent in Mosul, the main Iraqi hub of the Islamic State (IS) group's proclaimed "caliphate", said Christians were squeezing into private cars and taxis to beat a noon deadline.

"Some families have had all their money and jewellery taken from them at an insurgent checkpoint as they fled the city," said Abu Rayan, a Mosul Christian who had just driven out with his family.

"Some of our homes have already been confiscated and I know families who have handed their keys to neighbours, asking them to look after their property with the hope they would return one day."

The jihadists who have run the city since a sweeping military offensive that began six weeks ago has told the thousands of

Christians in Mosul they could convert, pay a special tax or leave.

An earlier statement by Mosul's new rulers had said there would be "nothing for them but the sword" if Christians did not abide by those conditions by 0900 GMT yesterday.

The Islamic State "seems intent on wiping out all traces of minority groups from areas it now controls in Iraq," Human Rights Watch said in a statement Saturday.

The mass displacement was the latest in weeks of turmoil which has forced more than 600,000 people from their homes, left thousands dead and brought Iraq to the brink of collapse.

Meanwhile, IS jihadists have killed 270 Syrian regime fighters, civilian security guards and staff since seizing a gas field in Homs province, most of whom were executed, a monitoring group said yesterday.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights also reported that a woman accused of adultery was stoned to death by IS in the northern city of Raqa, in the second such case in as many days.

# Forbes publisher sold to Asian investors

AFP, New York

The publisher of the US business magazine Forbes said Friday a controlling stake in the group had been sold to a Hong Kong-based investment consortium.

Forbes Media will remain privately held and US-based, but a majority stake is being sold to the newly formed Integrated Whale Media Investments, based in Hong Kong.

The Forbes family will retain "a significant ownership stake" in the company under the plan and will continue to participate in its operations. Steve Forbes, grandson of the company's founder, will maintain his role as chairman and editor-in-chief under the plan, which brings new capital into the publishing group.

"This is a major milestone for the company and our family, and we're pleased to partner with a forward-looking investor group to further drive the evolution and growth of this exceptional company," Steve Forbes said in a statement.

The amount of the investment was not disclosed by Forbes, but the New York Times said it will be some \$475 million.

The magazine, known for its rankings of wealthy Americans and global business leaders, was launched in 1917 by Scottish immigrant BC Forbes.

The magazine has some six million readers in the United States and international editions published in 21 languages, which brings the number of global readers to some 75 million.

The move comes amid turmoil in the print journalism segment, following the spinoff of Time Inc. -- which publishes Forbes rival Fortune -- by conglomerate Time Warner.

