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## Dutch government refuses to reveal 'secret deal' into MH17 crash probe

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Emergencies Ministry members walk at the site of a Malaysia Airlines Boeing 777 plane crash, MH17, near the settlement of Grabovo in the Donetsk region, July 17, 2014. (Reuters/Maxim Zmeyev)

The Dutch government has refused to reveal details of a secret pact between members of the Joint Investigation Team examining the downed Flight MH17. If the participants, including Ukraine, don't want information to be released, it will be kept secret.

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The respected Dutch publication Elsevier made a request to the Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice under the Freedom of Information Act to disclose the Joint Investigation Team (JIT) agreement, along with 16 other documents. The JIT consists of four countries - the Netherlands, Belgium, Australia and [Ukraine](#) - who are carrying out an investigation into the MH17 disaster, but not Malaysia. Malaysian Airlines, who operated the flight, has been criticized for flying through a war zone.

Ministerie weigert geheime deal MH17 openbaar te maken <http://t.co/r4SzCfC9N7>

— Pieter Omtzigt (@PieterOmtzigt) [November 19, 2014](#)

Part of the agreement between the four countries and the Dutch Public Prosecution Service, ensures that all these parties have the right to secrecy. This means that if any of the countries involved believe that some of the evidence may be [damaging](#) to them, they have the right to keep this secret.

*"Of course [it is] an incredible situation: how can Ukraine, one of the two suspected parties, ever be offered such an agreement?"* Dutch citizen Jan Fluitketel wrote in the newspaper Malaysia

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Despite the air crash taking place on [July 17](#) in Eastern Ukraine, very little information has been released about any potential causes. However, rather than give the public a [little insight](#) into the investigation, the Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice is more worried about saving face among the members of the investigation.

*"I believe that this interest [international relations] is of greater importance than making the information public, as it is a unique investigation into an extremely serious event,"* the Ministry added, according to Elsevier.

Could anyone call #MH17 investigation independent, if it runs by NATO and denies Malaysia, the owner of the plane, participation??  
— Vera Van Horne (@VeraVanHorne) [November 20, 2014](#)

Other reasons given for the request being denied included protecting investigation techniques and tactics as well as naming the names of officials who are taking part in the investigation. The Ministry said it would be a breach of privacy if they were revealed. *"If the information was to be released then sensitive information would be passed between states and organizations, which would perhaps they would be less likely to share such information in the future,"* said the Ministry of Security and Justice.

Dutch MP Pieter Omtzigt, who is a member of the Christian Democratic Party, has made several requests for the [information](#) to be released to the public.

*"We do not know what the Netherlands has committed itself to. The government neither published the agreement when we asked for it, nor did it show it to parliament,"* he said in reaction to the ministry's decision. *"It is perfectly normal that the Netherlands cooperate with other countries in this complex investigation. Yet they even kept the existence of the agreement secret a first and that was unnecessary."*



Journalists walk behind parts of the Malaysia Airlines plane Flight MH17 as Dutch investigators (unseen) arrive near at the crash site near the Grabove village in eastern Ukraine on November 11, 2014 (AFP Photo)

Malaysia is the only country to have directly negotiated with the anti-Kiev militias in the East of Ukraine, while the country's Ambassador to the Netherlands said he was unhappy that Malaysia had not been included within the JIT. Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte flew to Kuala Lumpur on November 5, but Malaysia says it still did not receive an invitation to join.

*"We must first be included in the JIT, otherwise it would be hard for us to cooperate in the*

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*investigation. The parties inside the investigation must include us in the team, right now we are just a participant,"* said the Malaysian Inspector-General of Police Khalid Abu Bakar in Kuala Lumpur on Wednesday, which was reported by the New Straits Times.

A [preliminary report](#) by the Dutch Safety Board, which was released September said the MH17 crash was a result of structural damage caused by a large number of high-energy objects that struck the Boeing from the outside.

Dutch investigators added that *"there are no indications"* that the tragedy was triggered *"by a technical fault or by actions of the crew."*

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