



Six Years On: The MH-17 Tragedy and Girkin's Damning Interview



Igor Girkin (Strelkov) at a press conference in Yekaterinburg, 2015.

Source: Dom Kobb via Wikimedia, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Igor_Ivanovich_Strelkov_Yekaterinburg5_\(cropped\).JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Igor_Ivanovich_Strelkov_Yekaterinburg5_(cropped).JPG), CCA-SA 4.0 Intl

OE Watch Commentary: The armed struggle in the Donbas region between pro-Russian separatist and Ukrainian forces continue to drag on. The destruction of Malaysian Airlines Flight MH-17 over SE Ukraine on 17 July 2014 was a turning point in how much of the world looked at this conflict. Thanks to monumental obfuscation on the part of the Kremlin-driven information juggernaut, those responsible for this tragedy have been able to evade justice. A trial surrounding this crime began in The Hague in March, but as the brief excerpt from the pro-business daily *Kommersant* points out, to date, the Kremlin leadership “continues to deny involvement in the tragedy.”

A new round of Kremlin denials occurred when the former commander of pro-Russian forces in Donbas, Igor Girkin (aka Igor Strelkov) recently spoke to journalists from both Britain and Ukraine about his brief role as commander of the separatist forces in the region. As the article points out, during both interviews, while Girkin stated that he “feels moral responsibility for these deaths,” he was adamant that his militia “did not bring down this plane.” When further queried as to whether he was suggesting that regular Russian military forces were responsible, Girkin replied, “people can interpret this as they please” and “declined to comment further.” (See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k7XeAfEgc-I> for full interview; Girkin’s comments regarding MH-17 begin at 2:42:00).

While Girkin’s interview was widely watched on social media (over 5 million views), not surprisingly, given the doubt it raises over Russian innocence, his interview was almost totally ignored by the major Kremlin-supported media. It remains highly unlikely that those responsible for this tragedy will even be brought to justice, but Girkin’s suggestion that regular Russian military forces were involved, implicates the highest level of command. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

“Russia continues to deny involvement in the tragedy...”

Source: Alena Miklashevskaya, “Стрелков взял на себя моральную ответственность за гибель пассажиров рейса MH17 (Strelkov took moral responsibility for the death of passengers on flight MH17),” *Kommersant*, 20 May 2020. <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4349791>

The British newspaper *The Times* took a brief comment from Igor Girkin (Strelkov), a former defense minister of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People’s Republic (DPR). He was questioned in connection with the upcoming June 8 hearing of the Hague District Court on the crash of flight MH17 on July 17, 2014.

Commenting on the story of the downed airplane, Mr. Girkin remarked: “Since I commanded the militias and participated directly in that conflict, I feel moral responsibility for these deaths.” At the same time, he repeated again that the militia “did not bring down this plane.” To the question of the publication about whether his statement would be perceived as a confession of guilt by the Russian military, Mr. Girkin replied: “People can interpret this as they please.” He declined to comment further.

On May 18, a four-hour interview with Igor Girkin was published on his YouTube channel by Ukrainian journalist Dmitry Gordon. In an interview, Mr. Girkin noted that he would not be surprised if he appeared before the Hague Tribunal.

July 17, 2014 a passenger plane Boeing 777 Malaysia Airlines, flying from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur, was shot down by a missile over the Donbass in the war zone. Killed all 298 people on board, including 80 children. The Russian citizen Igor Girkin (Strelkov) and his three former subordinates became suspects in this case. Russia continues to deny involvement in the tragedy.