



## **Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash**

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# **TRANSCRIPT**

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## **Sunrise**

### **E&OE:**

*Topics: Russia, Netherlands, Ukraine, MH17, International Civil Aviation Organisation, legal proceedings*

**JOURNALIST:** Well Australia and the Netherlands have launched the first international legal case against Russia over the downing of Flight MH17, which killed 280 people including 38 Australians. The plane was flying from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur when officials say it was shot down by a Russian missile. The Netherlands has a separate criminal case pending against four men charged with murder over the attack. Joining me now is the Attorney-General Michaelia Cash. Good morning to you. Well, fair to say that Russia isn't being the most cooperative global citizen right now. There's been a number of investigations surrounding this. How will this case be different? And what does Australia hope to achieve from it?

**MINISTER CASH:** Well, as the Australian Government has always said, we will do everything that we can, and we will pursue every avenue possible to achieve truth, justice and accountability for the 298 victims, 38 of whom are Australian, in relation to the downing of MH17. This is all about holding Russia accountable, and the International Civil Aviation Authority, they have the jurisdiction to do this. So we have instituted legal proceedings, we want a formal declaration that the Russians are responsible for the downing of MH17, we want them ordered to return to the negotiating table, and we want their voting rights on this council suspended until we get a satisfactory outcome. The Australian government has always been very, very clear: we will not stop until we get justice for all of those victims, the 298, 38 of whom were Australian, in relation to the downing of MH17.

**JOURNALIST:** That accountability has been sought previously, do you think they will cooperate this time around?

**MINISTER CASH:** Well, again, we will do everything that we can to ensure that they do. And certainly on the international stage, having your voting rights suspended in an international body is a very, very heavy price to pay, you will be voiceless, Russia will be voiceless in relation to the international civil aviation standards. We have always said as the Australian Government, we will pursue every avenue possible to achieve justice for those victims of MH17, and this is the next step in that process. We will not stop.

**JOURNALIST:** Yeah, we really hope that justification comes for the victims of course and their families. I've got to mention the timing of this. Obviously, pressure continues to mount on Russia politically, economically. Is that timing part of this as well?

**MINISTER CASH:** Well, certainly in relation to Russia's actions in Ukraine, that has now just reinforced that this next step in relation to the proceedings of MH17 are the right way to go. Again, they are separate proceedings, but certainly Russia's actions in relation to Ukraine and the invasion of Ukraine just reinforce that the Australian Government's position on launching this legal action in the International Civil Aviation Authority is the right one.

**JOURNALIST:** Have you communicated with the victims' families? And I guess assured them that that justice will come?

**MINISTER CASH:** My understanding is that yesterday that was undertaken to ensure that they did know what the next step in those proceedings were. And the feedback that I have had is that the victims' families have welcomed this next step. We have always said to them, those 38 Australians, we will as your government not stop until Russia is held accountable. And the initiation of these proceedings, and as you know, done in conjunction with the Netherlands, is the next step in that process.

**JOURNALIST:** You touched on the impact this could have for Russia, I mean, those penalties, can you define them for us? What is Russia facing here?

**MINISTER CASH:** Well, in the first instance, we do want the International Civil Aviation Organization to formally hold Russia accountable. That is what those victims' families need to hear. Russia is formally accountable. We want Russia ordered back to the negotiating table. We also want their voting right on that body, the ICAO, suspended until ICAO was satisfied that these proceedings have reached a good outcome. Now, in terms of other things that could happen, we might get compensation and an apology. That will ultimately be up to ICAO. But this is all about the Australian Government working with the Netherlands to formally hold Russia accountable for the downing of MH17.

**JOURNALIST:** Well, hopefully it is a positive response and a positive result. Michaelia Cash, thank you so much for joining us.

**MINISTER CASH:** Thank you very much.