

Headline	Loss of lives hits home in 13 countries		
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Loss of lives hits home in 13 countries

THE HAGUE: The human cost of the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 hit home around the world, upending scores of families and small communities spanning half of the planet, from a Dutch fishing village to an Australian soccer club and a Dubai cake store.

Relatives and colleagues paid emotional tribute to the dead. Students gathered to pray for lost friends, and even Tour de France cyclists paused for a moment's silence in memory of the 298 people killed in Ukraine.

The victims came from 13 countries and all walks of life.

Because the plane took off from Amsterdam, most were Dutch headed for Kuala Lumpur. But others were from elsewhere in Europe, Asia, Australia and New Zealand. One was a dual US-Dutch citizen, Malaysia Airlines said.

They left behind relatives searching for answers and clinging to memories.

"It's a black day," said Ron Peter Pabellon, a Filipino cake maker in Dubai who fears he lost an aunt,

uncle and two cousins, one of them his best friend.

The crash heaped tragedy upon tragedy for one Australian family that also had relatives aboard the Malaysian Airlines plane that vanished in March.

Kaylene Mann's brother Rod Burrows and sister-in-law Mary Burrows were on Flight 370, which is believed to have crashed into the southern Indian Ocean but has never been found.

On Friday, Mann learned that her stepdaughter, Maree Rizk, was killed on Flight MH17 with her husband Albert Rizk.

The United Nations organisation UNAIDS said the crash claimed "some of the finest academics, health care workers and activists" working on the disease.

The Academic Medical Center hospital in Amsterdam said two of its staff members, including renowned AIDS researcher Joep Lange, a former president of the International AIDS Society, and his

colleague Jacqueline van Tongeren were believed to have perished.

Dutch AIDS activist Pim de Kuijter was also killed.

Students at the Kincoppal-Rose Bay School of the Sacred Heart in Sydney gathered Friday for a special prayer meeting to remember Sister Philomene Tiernan, a 77-year-old teacher who was killed.

Australian school, Toorak College in Melbourne, was also affected.

Teacher Frankie Davison and her husband, Liam, were on the stricken flight.

Australian sports clubs were hit by the tragedy, too.

English Premier League soccer club Newcastle United said two of its fans who were flying to watch the team's tour of New Zealand were among the dead. The club's website named the supporters as John Alder and Liam Sweeney.

In Geneva, the World Health Organisation said spokesman Glenn Thomas, a 49-year-old Briton, was killed on his way to the AIDS conference. — AP



Grim task: Ukrainian rescue workers collecting bodies at the scene of the crash. — AFP