

# All wars are bad

**WHEN** I was first alerted via text on July 17

about the MH17 crash just after it happened, I thought it was a bad joke

but somehow I knew the sender (an employee of my firm) would not dare do such a thing. I had just returned from work late at night and headed straight to my PC to check the news. My heart sank when I realised it was true. I kept asking myself how such a tragic incident involving another MAS Boeing 777 plane could have happened when the nation and the world had hardly recovered from the shock of losing MH370 four months earlier.

The civilised world has been in shock and horror over this MH17 incident. From most news reports, it would appear that the plane was shot down by an advanced missile, fired by separatists in eastern Ukraine near the border with Russia. Even if the missile was fired by mistake thinking that MH17 was a military plane, it is still a crime against humanity and it does not soften the impact of the pain felt by the families and friends of the victims and most civilised people.

This tragedy is a reminder that all wars are bad, that often many innocent people have to suffer and die so unnecessarily. It is also a reminder that peace is such a precious and rare commodity that we often take it for granted. The only way to avoid such an incident anywhere in the world is to have real and lasting peace based on justice and equality and everyone has to play their part.

Beyond the Wall:  
A new mindset

BY K.K. TAN

Peace needs to be promoted pro-actively by all civilised people and not left to chance, which is likely to be undermined by unscrupulous

politicians, ultra-nationalists, jingoists, extremists, fanatics and racial and religious bigots.

Another international human tragedy caused by a violent conflict is the indiscriminate bombardment of the Palestinian people in Gaza by the Zionist war machine, killing more than 1,000 people including many women and children. There is no need to even go into the arguments of who provoked the bombardment. Mass killing is a crime against humanity, period.

Even many Jews around the world have openly condemned it and felt ashamed of the apartheid Zionist state committing this crime with such impunity and barbarity. Remember, this is also an ethnic war, started first by the expulsion and extermination of the Palestinian people from their homeland 66 years ago.

Interestingly, the United Nations (via its High Commissioner of Human Rights Navi Pillay) has stated that both the killing of Palestinians in Gaza by Israel and the downing of MH17 might be considered as war crimes.

To most Malaysians, the question about the downing of MH17 must be how a conflict so far away could affect our nation in such a dramatic manner. The Ukraine crisis was also an ethnic conflict which the central government in Ukraine has been struggling to contain in Crimea and

the other regions of different ethnicities.

The Red Cross stated last week that Ukraine is now at civil war, a classification that would make parties in the conflict more liable to prosecution for war crimes.

A news report has alleged that a key suspect involved in the downing of MH17, separatist leader Igor Girkin was also involved in the massacre of Muslims, as part of ethnic cleansing, in Bosnia in 1992. If this is true, it has added a new ethnic dimension to the MH17 tragedy that the plane was brought down by a racist and fascist leader and a war criminal in another region (Balkans).

This is not the first time that a passenger plane has been shot down either deliberately or by accident. Most such incidents in the past had been carried out by government forces. If it is true that MH17 was shot down by an advanced missile fired by the rebels in eastern Ukraine, this was the largest commercial airliner with the highest number of casualties (298 deaths) to be shot down by anti-government forces.

The MH17 crash may signal a worrying shift that rebel or separatist forces, which are generally more trigger happy and difficult to control, are acquiring more sophisticated weapons to use in an increasingly conflict-prone world. Therefore, civil aviation authorities and airlines would need to take special precautions which may increase the cost of flying as airlines may have to take a longer route to avoid flying over the growing number of conflict zones.

Wars and violent conflicts are



Girkin ... key suspect in downing of MH17.

often started when there are huge vested interests involved, usually over the control of territories with valuable resources coupled with geopolitical factors. The more powerful a nation, the greater responsibility it has to promote and secure peace especially when it has great influence over the smaller state/s and parties involved in the conflict.

A violent conflict would also break out when high emotions over ethnicity, manipulated by one side or another, cause the situation to reach boiling point. Politicians know and history has shown that it is easy to play the race card to get support and stir trouble. It is really a no-brainer and it does not require much intelligence to use this tactic.

The MH17 tragedy reminds us in

Malaysia that we are not immune to wars or violent conflicts around the world. We need to look global to understand the causes of wars and conflicts, to learn from them and play our own role via our direct good influence (if we have any) on the parties involved in a conflict and our membership in international associations such as the UN, Asean and OIC to oppose all wars and promote peace based on justice.

When we look global or even regional, it becomes even more glaring that a small nation like ours has such loud and arrogant extremists, chauvinists and bigots who are doing everything they can and with every excuse they can find to instigate ethnic conflict. Their only cause célèbre is a totally unproven claim and lie that their race and religion are under serious threat from the other fellow citizens, who have sacrificed, contributed and worked so hard to make this country more developed and generally harmonious.

Do our home-grown racial and religious extremists share the same ideology as the people who brought down MH17? Do they also share the same outlook as the racist and supremacist Zionist regime on its killing spree again? Let their hate speech and actions speak for themselves.

The writer, the CEO of a think-tank and strategic consultancy firm, believes that the causes of the MH17 tragedy could be traced to an ethnic war, which we must avoid at all cost. Comments: kktan@thesundaily.com