

**Speech by
Elisabeth PELSEZ
Inter-ministerial delegate for victim support**

**1st June 2018
Ceremony AF 447**

Monsieur le Directeur de Cabinet, représentant Madame la Secrétaire d'Etat aux transports,
Messieurs les Ambassadeurs,
Madame la Présidente, Monsieur le directeur général, Madame la Secrétaire Générale de la compagnie Air France,
Madame la Présidente de l'association Entraide et solidarité AF447,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Dear familles et proches,

During the night of 31May to 1st June 2009, an Air France Airbus 330 flying from Rio de Janeiro to Paris was lost in the Atlantic Ocean between the Brazilian and African coasts. This aircraft was carrying 228 passengers including 12 crew members, all of whom lost their lives.

Your lost loved-ones, who you miss so much, have their place in your hearts, but they also have their place here, at Père Lachaise, where every year, you come together at the memorial in their honour.

You have all come here today to pay tribute to them, and they are also in the thoughts of those who would have liked to attend this ceremony, but who we reunable to come.

These passing years have been a time of remembrance and a need to know the truth that you have expressed on so many occasions.

The memory of this tragic event perpetuated over almost a decade is essential for us all. As the disappearance of flight 447 over the South Atlantic left an indelible imprint as it bereaved so many families, it must also remain alive in our collective memory so that the wave of normality does not let it sink into oblivion.

The association Entraide et solidarité AF447, presided by Mrs Lamy, does a remarkable job, which I salute, acting together with those who have been through so much, upholding the need to know the truth in the course of the ongoing investigation and raising public awareness of what needs to be done to prevent such a disaster happening again.

I also know how much the FENVAC is there to provide support, help and comfort.

Your determination to find out the truth has been unwavering. You have had great courage and tenacity to reach these findings and you have not settled for technocratic answers. All these qualities require even more commitment on my part, as the inter-ministerial delegate for victim support, to assist you, listen to your expectations and your wishes and relay them relentlessly.

I cannot help but think of all the families of victims of air disasters that I have met and who have the same expectations as you. Expectations of the manifestation of the truth after lengthy

and complex legal proceedings, expectations of recognition of responsibilities at all levels, expectations of preventive measures to protect all those who travel and require safety and the certainty that everything is done to ensure this.

Your conviction remains, after all these years, that to avoid new catastrophes, we must understand and know exactly what happened. And for that you expect justice to be pronounced.

You will be reading out the names of your lost loved-ones in several foreign languages. I remember all those who have suffered the same ordeal and associate them with this ceremony.

I would like to quote, in their memory, a few words from the book entitled "The Innocent Crowd" by Denis Salas:

"Here the invisible becomes sensitive once again,
A flood of hope emerges,
Those who were taken away are united in a community of moments of which only art
has been able to imprint our memory.
The vortex of violent death, the solidarity of the victims of chance, the trials that
follow, the responsibilities that this legacy leaves us.
And finally, the need to testify to prevent the scattering of the living fountains of our
humanity".