



Entraide et solidarité AF 447

Association Loi 1901 (Siret : 517 490 728 00014 - APE : 9499Z)

Maison des Associations, 22 rue Deparcieux - BL 91 -75014 Paris

Tel : +33 6 78 64 79 69

Courriel : entraideca@af447.fr

Site Web : www.asso-af447.fr

Présidente : Danièle Lamy

10th commemoration ceremony speech **Danièle Lamy**

Dear French Minister of Ecological and Solidarity Transition, and
Transport,

Inter-ministerial Delegate for victims' support,

Ambassadors,

Air France CEO,

Ladies and Gentlemen, families and friends,

Today, June 1st already marks the tenth year we have been gathering at this memorial to perpetuate and honour the memory of our loved ones. It is to those who lost their lives on this tragic day and whose names are engraved in stone for eternity in Paris and Rio that I wish to pay a personal tribute today. The tragic accident of the Rio-Paris flight that disappeared over the Atlantic on the night of June 1st, 2009, took the lives of 228 people from 32 countries.

You have been in our thoughts for these past ten years – sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, spouses, parents and friends – you are no longer among us but are forever in our hearts and minds. We will always remember that day of June 1st at Roissy, waiting anxiously for news, and overcome with grief on learning the devastating news that “all hope was lost”.

Countless questions rapidly invaded our lives - how could an appreciated national airline, how could a renowned manufacturer's airliner boasting the most modern and up-to-date technology and considered infallible, how could they let such a disaster happen?

We could not let doubt or suspicion take hold in our consciences, to let the most senseless rumours run free, as well as the bitterness and frustrations. For you, our dignity was at stake, we had a duty to seek the truth, to shed light on the various responsibilities, to allow justice to explain the unspeakable fatality – how such a tragedy could have occurred and why it was not avoided?

Dear loved ones, your sacrifice must not be in vain. From the beginning of July 2009, a group of us met to collectively reflect on the tragedy and with the support of the FENVAC (French national federation for the victims of catastrophes) laid the foundations of our association “Entraide&Solidarité AF447”. Its existence was confirmed in September 2009. We relentlessly pursued our efforts to assure you of our continued support, compassion and solidarity; we provided your families with regular information updates through the difficult times; we remained committed to our duty to honouring your memory vis-à-vis the public and the authorities.

We scrupulously oversaw the sea search operations which, lasting a duration of two long years, were punctuated by uncertainties, controversy and renunciations. The insensitivity to the distress of families awaiting the cruelest of outcomes to which they faced the additional anguish of identifying the located victims, either during the first days of June 2009 or in spring 2011, and publicly revealed in the most disastrous manner. Your identification was a particularly cruel blow to your families, after receiving your autopsy report a few days before Christmas 2011.

Should we mention here our pugnacity to locate you; involving officials at the highest level, not hesitating to steer the direction of the investigation. In April 2011, the wreck was located, near the place that the association had designated in September 2009; two years of unnecessary aberrations! You were resting on a peaceful ocean floor, a tomb of ineffable serenity. What good could come of disturbing this peace and silence? The response lies in the depths of our conscience.

Many of you found an earthly burial, many others will continue their abyssal wandering but all of you will remain in the depths of our hearts. We are gathered here, today, to show you our love, loyalty and dedication to honouring your memory.

And throughout these endless years of expert and final expert's reports, complacency of all kinds, sometimes dubious impartiality, we have endeavoured to maintain our search for truth, to approach it with unfailing determination and total objectivity, whatever the entities concerned.

Faithful to our duty of memory, we have and continue to closely follow the legal investigation to ensure that no path is overlooked, that no shadow tarnishes your sacrifice and no institutional amnesia overshadows the real responsibilities.

Dear loved ones, we have been honouring your memory for the past ten years, to ensure that your memory is never erased from public concerns, and for it to be the reference in improving flight safety to prevent such a disaster from happening ever again. Unfortunately, recent events in the news – the two Boeing 737 MAX crashes, is a cruel reminder and demonstrates that once again, the lessons of such a tragedy have been forgotten in favour of a most absurd progress.

Finally, to assuage our consciences, for the respect of the victims that you are, may justice be done – impartial justice, without procrastination, without resistance, without controversy on all fronts, a justice that will shed light on this fatal night.

“The truth, according to Condorcet, belongs to those who seek it, not to those who claim to own it”.

To all of you who have been listening to my words, I would like to express my strongest wishes that this moment of collective comfort, shared emotion and remembrance in front of this memorial to all those who lost their lives be renewed every year, on June 1st.

Thank you.