

## **SPEECH GIVEN ON THE OCCASION OF THE REPATRIATION CEREMONY OF THE FRENCH VICTIMS**

Mr. Minister,

Madam the Inter-ministerial Delegate for Victims' Assistance,

Dear coordinators,

Ladies and Gentlemen Journalists,

Forgive me if my voice betrays the very strong emotion of this ceremony and the last 48 hours I spent in Ethiopia to accompany the last trip of our loved ones.

My speech will last six minutes. 6 minutes during which our hearts will beat 440 times each and our lungs will breathe in and out 120 times.

Six minutes, on the scale of a lifetime, it is nothing. However, this is enough to upset a balance and shatter a life.

6 minutes, just like the last minutes of the life of Clémence, Xavier, Eric, Karim, Racha, Jean-Michel, Suzanne, Camille, Sarah and Jonathan, to whom we are paying tribute today.

Mr. Secretary of State, I thank you for your presence, which is a testimony of the Nation's support and friendship to our families in the terrible ordeal we are going through. I can assure you that it will remain a great comfort in the future... This ceremony is the final step of an endless wait, with countless and agonizing developments. 7 months later, we are starting our fight.

Gentlemen coordinators, we, the families bring our hearts together to tell you how grateful we are for your support and for your work, which have always been discreet and respectful. Since March 10, you have tried to pacify us and to help us through our mourning process until this day of "reunion" we had been longing for so eagerly. You have been considerate enough to listen to our wishes and fears when arranging the ceremony

Ladies and gentlemen Journalists, we thank you for coming. We wanted your presence to highlight this moment and open the chronology of our history.

On March 10, 2019, the Ethiopian Airlines flight 302, operated by a Boeing 737 Max, crashed in Ethiopia killing our child, mother or father, brother or sister, husband or fiancée.

Mr Lemoine, Ladies and Gentlemen Journalists, let me introduce you to our loved ones. Did you know why they were on that plane bound for Nairobi?

Camille, 28, incarnated the joy of life and generosity. She was passionately dedicated to her humanitarian work. After several missions in refugee camps in Central Africa and Southern Sudan, she was moving to Kenya for a new mission, a safer one she believed... and more importantly she was joining Zak, her boyfriend.

Clémence, 44, mother of two children aged 12 and 10, altruistic and generous, with extraordinary kindness and a sense of fairness that never ran out of steam. She was returning to Nairobi, as part of her work with an NGO, and was preparing to provide training on ethical issues, negotiations and access to populations in war zones.

Invited as a speaker to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Nairobi, Eric, 45, stood out for his intelligence, inventiveness and unique sense of humor that gathered and attracted around him executives and academics from all over the world. A polyglot and a globetrotter, his open-mindedness transcended cultural, social, religious or political boundaries.

Xavier, 38, was a brilliant man, curious about everything and highly cultured, with an insatiable thirst to learn and share his knowledge. He had chosen to be a guide for the youngest children in French schools in Guyana, Russia and Kenya, where he had just taken what should have been his last position abroad before returning to France to get married. He devoted 12 years of his life to the service of the National Education, eventually losing his life for it.

Jonathan, 45, a successful manager of the Tamarind hotel group in Kenya, was the father of three children aged 11, 9 and 7. He believed in people and pushed them beyond their limits. With the Seas4Life association, of which he was a co-founder, he fought to protect and clean the oceans, driven by a "zero plastic" vision. He was on his way to Nairobi to participate in a 680 km race from Kaijado to Watamu to raise awareness on environmental issues.

Unifying parents, Suzanne and Jean-Michel, 63 and 67 were also grandparents of three young children with whom they shared their joy of gardening, fishing or DIY. This retired couple were loyal friends, selfless, always willing to help, they were going to Kenya to spend time for themselves thinking they would return full of memories to share with their loved ones.

Karim, was Franco-Tunisian. He preferred to say that he was African-European. This 39-year-old man was building bridges between the African and European youth. He wanted people to surpass themselves and, through his presence and clairvoyance, he conveyed a message of multi-directional hope that will last well beyond March 10, 2019. He was on his way to the United Nations conference on sustainable development.

Racha, 35 years old, was French-Djiboutian. She had in her heart the emergence of Africa, which she thought fulfilled all the requirements to be harmonious and sustainable. As a young and modern woman, she said that "forgetting the women in the development of the African continent would be depriving ourselves of half of the African society". Racha was bringing people together, was loyal to her family, true to her convictions and promoted a fair world.

6 minutes. 6 very short minutes for 10 extraordinary citizens and defenders of our world who were committed to make it safer, more sustainable, more united and more educated. Symbols of a generation that reinvents ideals, that breaks free from borders and preconceptions, that is afraid of nothing when it comes to acting in the field, they never accepted fatalism, and always saw the birth of the river in the stream. Also symbols of a generation that was flying in the air from a United Nations conference to a humanitarian emergency zone or sometimes just for the sake of enriching their knowledge of our vast planet, they carried values that are transmitted, that nourish and inspire our ways of thinking and lifestyles here and everywhere.

6 last minutes that should never have ended... in a plane that should never have flown. 6 minutes that deprived us of the rest of our lives with Jonathan, Suzanne, Jean-Michel, Eric, Camille, Xavier, Racha, Karim, Clémence and Sarah.

To date, the Boeing 737 Max is still grounded and banned from flying. The certification authorities are still concerned with some corrections on the aircraft. Several official reports and communications have highlighted malfunctions in the design of the aircraft and in its certification by the FAA. These malfunctions led to the commissioning of an aircraft that did not comply with flight safety regulatory requirements. The Lion Air crash of a Boeing 737 Max, killing 189 people, 5 months before the Ethiopian Airlines crash, raised some serious questions about the relevance of the response made by Boeing and the FAA, the way the assessed the risk and the certification of the aircraft. The crash of flight ET 302 causing another 157 deaths did not answer any of these questions but only raised new ones.

The families' association will fight relentlessly to establish the truth so that flight safety remains an absolute priority in the face of economic and political interests, so that responsibilities are established and justice is done. This is the only way the death of the 157 passengers of this flight will make any sense!