

Ladies and gentlemen, girls and boys, dear relatives of the victims in flight MH17, wherever you are in the world. Welcome to this online commemoration.

We have published my speech on the foundations website especially for the foreign relatives.

We thank Prime Minister Rutte for his words and especially for his unwavering support, as we experienced it also last week. And we are still grateful for the support of all those others who are committed to the interests of the surviving relatives and to justice

Six years ago today, flight MH17, containing our loved ones, was violently and horrifically shot down.

And today is the 7th time that we commemorate our loved ones together since our first commemoration in the Rai on 10 November 2014.

And we commemorate together, because that is and remains important. And although not all of you can physically attend and touch and comfort each other where needed, we are still together. Connected via live stream, but all together in spirit.

We will remember this year's commemoration for a long time. A commemoration that left us, as the board of the foundation, to face the difficult task of making choices. Taking coronavirus measures into account and still commemorate together. It had to be a digital commemoration. Just under 2.5 weeks ago, the measures were relaxed, but this did not give us enough time to organise a joint physical commemoration. The municipality has offered the option for relatives to visit the trees throughout the day.

I would like to sincerely thank the relatives who have shown their understanding and who have supported the foundation in this situation.

And here we are, in an almost empty amphitheatre. In the silence I can hear the flags of all the victim's countries waving in the wind. They are at half mast.

We are standing here amidst 298 sunflowers, one for every loved one. At the MH17 National Monument, which is again maintained for us this year by many volunteers and the Recreatieschap. We are incredibly grateful to them. We also thank all those who have worked to make this commemoration possible.

Not only will this special commemoration be etched in our memory. The year 2020 will perhaps go down in history as a unique and important year for many people. On 9 March of this year, the trial of the four suspects accused of being involved in the downing of flight MH17 commenced. The sessions could be attended or followed via live stream at home and in Nieuwegein. Many surviving relatives from the Netherlands and abroad have done so. The start of the trial was a moment that we have all been waiting for with patience and dignity for a long time.

These were sessions that we knew would make a deep impression on us and which often transported us back in time. But it was also the hearings, where we listened with admiration

and respect, and saw how the JIT and the Public Prosecution Service spared no effort to get to the truth.

At the same time, as relatives we have to deal with an increase in social media disinformation and the utterly disrespectful denial of any responsibility for the deaths of our loved ones. That is difficult for us and totally incomprehensible.

However, it is important to maintain our confidence in justice and the law, and there is no reason whatsoever to lose that confidence, despite any countermovements.

We know that getting justice is a long-term process. We also see this in the proceedings before the European Court of Human Rights and the proceedings regarding state liability. But as relatives we have shown that we are united in our quest for justice. That we know we must be patient and that we can do that. That it is essential for the world to know what happened, why it happened, and who is responsible for the deaths of our loved ones. And that this long journey sometimes takes a heavy toll on you as relatives, who are unwillingly, but inevitably and constantly confronted with painful memories and painful information.

In a few moments we will read out the names of our loved ones. It is very important for us and the memory of our loved ones that the names of our loved ones are mentioned.

So that our loved ones are not forgotten.

After reading out the names, we hold a minute of silence together, preceded by playing The Last Post.

I wish you all strength today, and we hope to meet you here live again next year.