

Speech by Dr. Padmini Turlapati at 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative  
Service of Flight 182 Air India ( Kanishka) crash on  
June 23, 2005 at Ahakista, Cork County, Ireland

Dear Friends,

This year for the twentieth anniversary all of us gathered yet once again to remember our beloved ones and to express our deepest gratitude to these people of Ireland who without a moment's hesitation embraced us with their compassion, kindness and brought this flock of the world's most forgotten wretched living dead out of their stupor. Your love gave us the will to live on. We developed a kinship with you because you represent the best of humanity. You beautiful compassionate people understood the pangs of agony some of us who have sought refuge & comfort year after year and have sustained our flagging spirits. And since it is with your permission that I can come on my pilgrimage to become a mother for a day or week of my stay here that unmasked & vulnerable I am able to speak to you.

Yesterday I met families after a long time. The last time we met we were congratulating one another on finding a body or even a limb. Fate made us strange bedfellows. Tomorrow again we will go our separate ways but today & at this moment we all belong to one another. Our private lives became public & there was only a beginning with no end in sight. Hearts united through medium of sorrow are not separated & the love cleansed by tears remains pure & the spiritual affinity that was created in that moment would not be created in years or generations.

It does not matter that the event took place 20 years ago & for the rest of the world it was time to move on. When Deepak said you love Sanjay more than me I would say if he's the vision you're the light in my life. The boys I loved and lost it is true they exist in my memory.

They live in a poem I recite, a toy or medal I fondly dust in their room or voice I suddenly remember & listen to with my head bent. This ongoing saga became my destiny & cross to bear.

This senseless mass murder the worst air disaster in the entire history of the world continues to rob us of our right to privacy, dignity and justice. I recognize we are not alone in our loneliness and others have been here & know of grief we thought was our special own. But we are unique in that we patiently endure & feel by silence betrayed but this never ending saga takes its toll on us physically and emotionally & we continue to pay the price in our daily lives in upholding with dignity our right

to live, love, hope & trust. We all come here on a pilgrimage to our loved ones. We each replenish our strengths on this holy ground and we go away taking with us this garden of love entrusting our only sacred refuge in your hands.

The verdict appalled & decimated back to ground zero. All repressed memories of horror and terror returned. No one was accountable. The evil that conspired being rich & powerful abetted by an unwilling and inept evasive system walk freely on. It seems to me unpardonable insult to injury when the convoluted soap opera still continues and all those innocents sacrificed seem in vain. Is no one accountable except us who put them on a plane? Are we never destined to find closure?

We live in the hope that humanity on its own self-interest will not allow the deaths of our loved ones to be in vain. The flame of that hope did get a lashing in recent times yet today in the presence of all these dignitaries of the State reaffirms that our hope shall be realized one day.

Do not trivialize the magnitude of this tragedy by saying nothing can be done or 20 years have gone by. History will never forgive the impotence of our inaction. It is our belief that not having a public inquiry will just do that. Put yourselves in our shoes dear friends and look into your hearts & souls for the answer.

Thank you.