

Trudeau in York to mark anniversary of tragedy

By Mark PavilonsEditor

A sombre ceremony marked the fourth anniversary of the horrible tragedy of Flight PS 752. On Jan. 8, 2020, the Islamic Republic of Iran fired two missiles into Ukraine International Airlines Flight 752 (departing Tehran en route to Kiev) causing the aircraft to crash. It killed 176 people onboard, including 55 Canadian citizens and 30 permanent residents. Events were held province-wide and in York, the Association of Families of Flight PS752 Victims, hosted an event at the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was on hand to mark the occasion. He noted the Iranian regime continues to disregard human rights and destabilize peace. The human cost, profound suffering, occurs when violence and unrest take innocent lives. In the last four years, Iran has not taken responsibility for their actions, but they must be held accountable. With partners, the Prime Minister said they are taking the matter to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). "Our objective is to ensure that tragedies such as this one never happen again. Every human life must be respected," he said. The history of the Iranian regime shows they do not respect fundamental values, and the murder of the passengers of 752 is yet another example. "Our government condemns the Islamic Republic's regime for the disregard for the law, sham trials, oppression of peaceful protests," he said. Canada has put in place severe sanctions on almost 450 Iranian individuals and entities, along with top officials, meaning tens of thousands are banned from coming to Canada. Trudeau said federal officials have also opened 141 investigations. "But we know there is more to do. We will continue our work, look for ways to list Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as a terrorist organization and explore any and all other options." Nobleton's Shahin Moghaddam lost his wife Shakiba and young son Rosstin in the tragedy. Through various avenues, the Association and its members have been trying to seek justice, and encouraging the federal government to take a stronger stance against Iran's actions. Pierre Poilievre, Leader of the Conservative Party of Canada and the Official Opposition, said in a statement this "was an evil act of mass murder that further underscored what our country has known for a long time - the IRGC is a terrorist group." In the days since the attack, the families of the victims have repeatedly called on the Canadian government to criminalize the IRGC and officially list it as a banned terrorist organization in Canada. "Unfortunately, for four years, the IRGC has been given a safe harbour in Canada. The tyrants in Tehran and the murderers in the IRGC have continued to sow chaos and destruction. A few months ago, the IRGC supported and funded Hamas' invasion of Israel, instigating sadistic violence against innocent civilians and the murder of several Canadian citizens." The government must end the delay. Canada must be a leader in condemning the actions of these terrorists and stand in solidarity with the victims and their families. "Conservatives will build on the work of the previous Conservative government that officially recognized Iran as a state sponsor of terrorism. A Poilievre government will list the IRGC as a banned terrorist organization; we will seize the assets of the Iranian regime in Canada and give them to the families of Flight PS752; we will impose broad and sweeping sanctions to cripple the regime and help pave the way for Iranians to bring home freedom and democracy for their people." In the names of the victims of Flight PS752 and the thousands of people who continue to be tormented by the IRGC, we must, and will, do better.