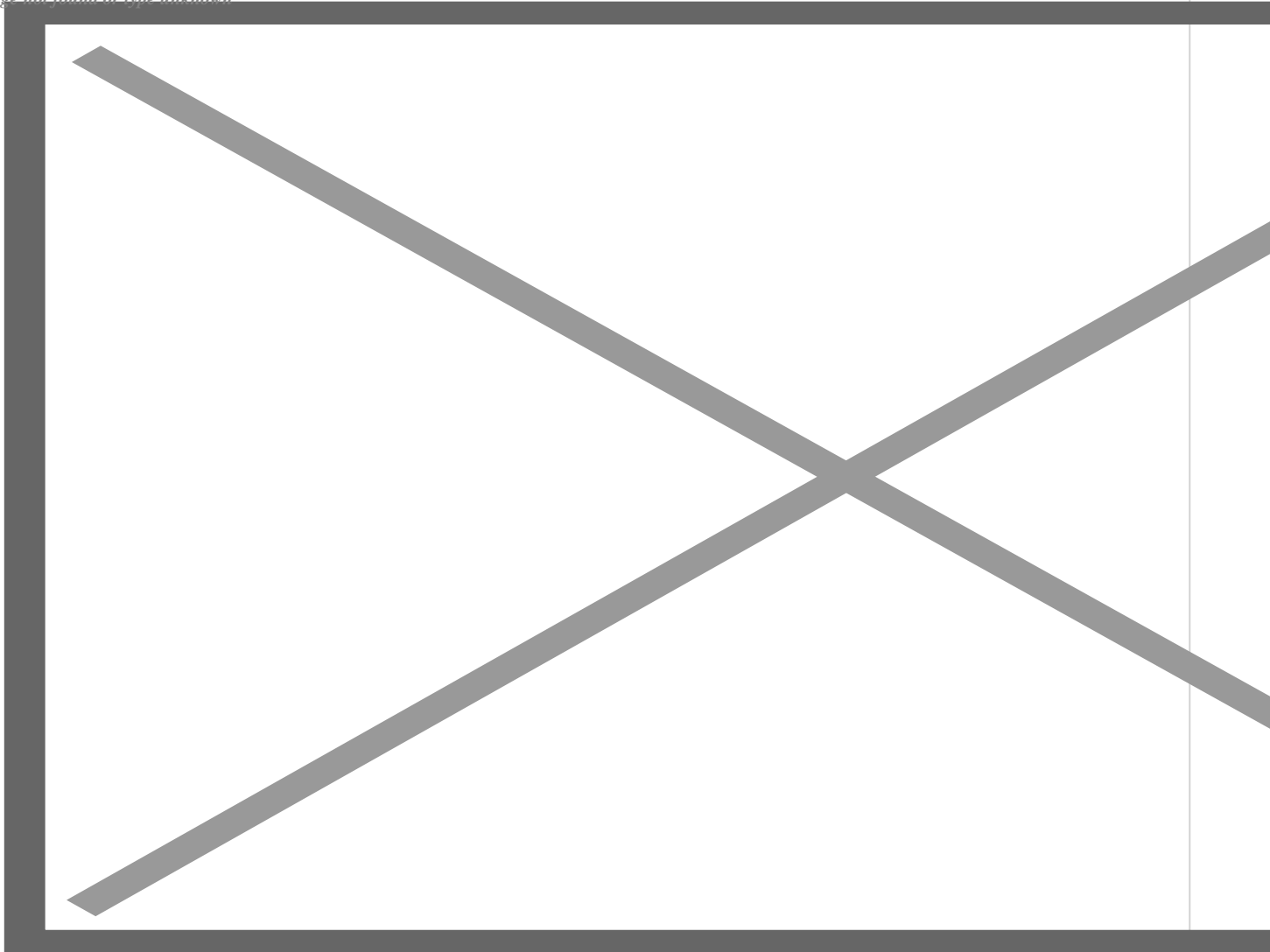


Iran marks anniversary of U.S. downing of passenger flight

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Iranians toss flowers into the water at the site of the 1988 US downing of a civilian aircraft 34 years ago, at a location near the Strait of Hormuz and Hengam Island, on July 3, 2023. Photo: IRNA

Tehran, July 3 (RHC)-- Iran has commemorated the 35th anniversary of the downing of its passenger plane by a US Navy guided-missile cruiser over the country's territorial waters in the Persian Gulf, which killed all 290 people on board.

During a memorial ceremony on Monday, local officials and the families of the tragedy's victims tossed flowers into the waters near the site of the crash. Chanting slogans such as "Down with the U.S." and "Down with Israel," the participants condemned the inhumane US crime and expressed their utter disgust at the criminal act.

Reacting to the occasion, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kan'ani noted that the Iranian nation will never forget this horrible crime committed by the United States. "We are commemorating the anniversary of the tragic incident of the Iranian passenger plane being hit by the U.S., which gave the commander of this terrible operation a medal of courage," he said.

"The Iranian nation will never forget the sanctions and hundreds of other crimes committed by the US," Kan'ani stressed, adding that Washington has taken every action to achieve its illegitimate goals.

On July 3, 1988, the USS Vincennes fired missiles at an Iran Air Airbus A300B2 which was flying over the Hormuz Strait from the port city of Bandar Abbas to Dubai, carrying 274 passengers and 16 crew members.

Following the attack, the plane disintegrated and crashed into the Persian Gulf waters, killing all 290 on board, among them 66 children. U.S. officials claimed that the USS Vincennes had mistaken Iran Air Flight 655 for a warplane. This is while the warship was equipped with highly sophisticated radar systems and electronic battle gear at the time of the attack.

In 1990, the captain of the cruiser, William C. Rogers, was cleared of any wrongdoing, and was even awarded America's Legion of Merit medal by then-U.S. President George Bush for his "outstanding service" during operations in the Persian Gulf.

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