

"The crisis in Ukraine has established new requirements for our strategic leadership, internal security and military defence," stated the President, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, today at the National Defence Council. The Council discussed interim reports about the military crisis in Ukraine that has lasted for about two months by now, and drew conclusions for Estonian national defence.

"Deterrence has become an important key word in this new situation – this has to be convincing and concrete. The visible and long-term military presence of NATO and Allied forces in the Baltic states is one component of this. The arrival of the 173rd US Airborne Brigade company and the multiplication of NATO fighters that patrol the Baltic airspace serve as good examples in this regard," the Head of State said.

President Ilves added that deterrence also depends on ourselves: how much are we willing to spend on military defence and whether the politicians make well-considered or populist decisions. "The question of national defence is probably most important for people in Estonia right now and will remain prevalent also for the upcoming twelve months. I recommend that the politicians will consider this," the Head of State said.

The Estonian leaders were given a detailed overview of the current situation Ukraine and the Baltic region and the possible assessments for the future.

The National Defence Council is the advisory body of the President of the Republic. The Speaker of the Riigikogu, Prime Minister, Chairman of the National Defence Committee of the Riigikogu, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Riigikogu, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Defence, Minister of Finance, Minister of Internal Affairs, Minister of Justice and Commander of the Defence Forces all sit on the Council.

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