

Estonia's security will be safe when, aside from modern soldiers, warfare and powerful deterrence, we also have a coherent society, third sector thinking and voluntary efforts and good education, said President Toomas Hendrik Ilves yesterday in his speech at a dinner organised by the Carolin Illenzeer Foundation.

The Head of State described the importance of Estonian national defence maintaining its contribution to security in other countries where Estonian Defence Force members are deployed – the Middle East, Kosovo and Mali. Soon, an infantry team will depart on a UN peace-securing mission in Lebanon: "These are not strange missions. Just like the barracks in Tapa is not a strange location for a Navy Seal from Ohio, US, or Ämari airfield for a pilot from Spain."

"It is highly important to offer our people the security that building, dreaming and striving towards the future in Estonia makes sense," said the Head of State. "To make them feel that Estonia is a state based on the rule of law, where we can be sure that our courts and the verdicts that they reach are fair and just. That Estonia won't go bankrupt or be pulled down by a deadly maelstrom. That disagreements can be settled without involving violence. That people are measured according to their values, skills and attitude and not according to their origin, religion and mother tongue. That we will involve our compatriots without classifying people as good and second-rated, enemies or worthless creatures with different way of looking at the world."

In speaking of veteran policies adopted in Estonia, President Ilves emphasised the importance of not forgetting about our veterans and their concerns.

"I acknowledge all who are committed to national defence – the members of the Defence Forces and the Defence League, and their families," said President Ilves, as he thanked everyone who has contributed to supporting national defence.

Revenues generated by Carolin Illenzeer Foundation-organised charity dinner will be used to support the education and hobby activities of children of defence force members who have been killed or wounded in action. There are 50 such children at the moment.

Office of the President
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