

President Toomas Hendrik Ilves made a statement today on Estonian Television and Estonian Radio concerning the provocations in Tallinn on the night of April 26 and early morning of April 27.

Dear fellow countrymen!

What we witnessed in Tallinn last night was looting, uproar, plundering. It was a crime, and those who took part in it are criminals.

All this had nothing to do with the inviolability of graves or keeping alive the memory of men fallen in World War II.

The common denominator of last night's criminals was not their nationality but their desire to riot, vandalise and plunder.

My apologies to those who doubted last night whether our state would be able to defend them against the rioters.

The state cannot have doubts or hesitate when public order and security must be restored. Public order in Estonia must hold good. Without it, Estonia is not a state.

Do not look for accusations in my words. They are spoken as encouragement to our

government to act firmly in defending our common security.

The looters shall be caught, their guilt proven, they shall be punished fast and with due severity. The mills of the rule of law grind inescapably.

I thank all the policemen who were at work in Tallinn last night. One of them, a policewoman who tried to hinder the looting of a kiosk, is presently in hospital with a fracture.

I hope for the support and understanding of all parents and teachers, for their readiness to explain, both home and at school, that participation in brutal violations of public order will leave a stain on the whole future of young people. At least for those who want to live in Europe.

I invite everyone to refrain from arousing, provoking or confusing opinions or appeals. Estonia has no need for taunting comments that instigate hostility, or gloating declarations looking for political profit.

I invite everyone to exercise level-headed and rational thinking.

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