

“Victory Day has brought us a tragic message of mourning, because this morning, Estonian soldiers Sergeant Kalle Torn and Junior Sergeant Jako Karuks were killed in the Helmand Province of Afghanistan, and four of their fellow soldiers were wounded, two of them seriously,” said President Toomas Hendrik Ilves.

“I express my condolences to the families of Kalle Torn and Jako Karuks, and affirm that their bereavement is also my bereavement,” said the Head of State.

“Kalle Torn and Jako Karuks, like their wounded fellow soldiers, were not just soldiers but demining experts, whose assignment was to clear Afghanistan, that has been burdened by war for decades, of the deadly munitions that have been buried there,” said the President.

“This demonstrates how blind the hatred of the Taliban is against those that are helping Afghanistan to join the circle of peaceful nations. This demonstrates how difficult and dangerous our battle for a peaceful Afghanistan, along with the Afghans, is. This demonstrates that we do not have the right to discontinue this mission,” said President Ilves.

He affirmed that he hopes for the recovery of the four wounded members of the defence forces.

“Kalle Torn and Jako Karuks join a silent formation alongside Junior Sergeant Andres Nuiamäe and Sergeant Major Arre Illenzeer who were killed in Iraq. These are all men that wanted to improve the world,” said the Head of State.

“Estonia is decorated with flags today. I will lower the flag at my home to half mast to mourn the Estonian soldiers that fell in Afghanistan on Victory Day and ask that all my compatriots do the same,” said President Ilves on 23 June.

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