

In his New Year's greetings to the members of the Defence Forces serving on foreign missions, President Toomas Hendrik Ilves affirmed that the men and women serving in Estonian uniform in Afghanistan, the Balkans or Iraq deserve the greatest respect and thanked them for their splendid service and dedication.

"Your service benefits your Defence Forces, your country, and more broadly, all of us. Moreover, you have garnered respect in your homeland and among our allies. At many meetings with our allied leaders during this past year, I was very pleased to hear their sincere plaudits regarding you," President Ilves wrote to the soldiers. "This respect and esteem provides an important guarantee that we in Estonia will also receive assistance, when we need it."

"The Estonian state has a responsibility to support you in every way. I earnestly hope that during the next year the system of social guarantees for members of the Defence Forces serving on foreign missions will be put in order. This would allow you to do your dangerous work with slightly more peace of mind," the Head of State emphasized.

President Ilves affirmed that he has the greatest respect for the families of the soldiers, because, without their understanding attitude and solid support, it would be much more difficult for the men and women on foreign missions.

The Head of State wished the members of the Defence Forces a peaceful turn of the year, as well as a soldier's fortune and success in their private life in the upcoming year of 2008.

Office of the President
Public Relations Department
Phone +372 631 6229