

On 1 February in Kadriorg, the Memory Institute was established under the leadership of President Toomas Hendrik Ilves, to thoroughly examine the events that took place in Estonia during the second half of the 20th century. The founders of the Institute are Tiit Sepp, Rein Kilk, Leon Glikman, Indrek Teder, Hannes Tamjärv, and Jaan Manitski. Tiit Sepp was elected Chairman of the Supervisory Board.

“Today we are founding the Memory Institute, which is a continuation of the commission created by President Lennart Meri and led by Max Jakobson. The goal of the Memory Institute is to examine the systematic violations of human rights in Estonia, and in regard to citizens of the Republic of Estonia, in 1944–1991,” President Ilves said.

The Head of State stressed that the research of the Memory Institute is necessary in order to get over the past without hate and prejudice and to cope with the present. “I do not want our past to become a cudgel that can be used in domestic and foreign policy for decades to come,” the Head of State said.

“The Memory Institute must be built up in a way that avoids the creation of a politicized treatment of history in respect to our recent past,” President Ilves said adding that exactly the same work organization should be used as was employed by the Jakobson Commission to investigate crimes against humanity.

According to the Estonian Head of State, therefore the most important step for the Memory Institute to take is to create an international commission to direct the research, come to the necessary conclusions, and if necessary, provide assessments.

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