

In today's memorial address on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the March Deportation, President Toomas Hendrik Ilves called upon all his compatriots to preserve the memories of the deportees, to determine the fate of all the victims of the mass deportation and to find out the perpetrators, and thereby heal the wounds in the soul of the Estonian people.

“We must do all this in order to avoid gaps in our national memory. Moreover, to serve as validation against those who deny or ridicule the deportations, against those who call upon us to forget our past,” the Head of State said in his speech at the Occupations Museum.

President Ilves proposed that a memorial be established to commemorate all those who suffered repressions, where people can mourn and commemorate the victims. “We are indebted to all the people whose burial places are not known or are far from home. They are the martyrs to the restoration of our independence,” the President said.

According to the Head of State, ascertaining the identity of the deporters will give us a moral guarantee for the future that, in a country based on the rule of law, every criminal and crime will be made public. This will also help us determine the motives that induce people to commit such crimes.

In today's address, President Ilves criticised populist attacks against the Constitution, and added, “The same risk to our rule of law is posed by the malice and anger that we encounter in public and anonymous statements and commentaries. Reading and hearing them, it occurs to me – what would happen if this maliciousness found the opportunity to express itself in actions?”

According to the Head of State, we need to consider the infinitely more desperate conditions endured by the victims of the deportations during the difficulties resulting from economic setbacks.

“Therefore, I call upon you to help bring Estonia back to reality. You are the confirmation of the idea that we can always manage,” said President Ilves, addressing the deportees.

President Ilves: we have an obligation to cope with our past

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The full text of the speech is available [here](#) .

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