

The Ambassador of the Arabic Republic of Syria, Mr. Farouk Taha, today handed over his letters of credential to the President, Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves.

At the meeting with Ambassador Taha, President Ilves raised the issue of seven citizens of the Republic of Estonia, who were kidnapped on 23 March in Lebanon.

“We have contacted all countries in the region on this issue and are looking forward to close co-operation with all of them to locate our kidnapped citizens and have them released,” said the Estonian Head of State. “We do hope that Syrian officials will be effective partners for us within the limits set by their resources.”

Ambassador Taha assured the Estonian Head of State that the issue of kidnapped Estonians is important for the Syrian authorities and he promised to contribute in any way possible to close co-operation between Estonian and Syrian officials to resolve this issue.

President Ilves assured that Estonia is following, with great attention, political developments that take place in the Arabic countries, and he expressed his hope that they will be moving towards democracy. He emphasised the need to settle the conflicts between various social groups in Syria by means of peaceful political dialogue, ruling out any violence.

The Ambassador of Iraq, Mr. Abdul Kareem Toma Mehdi Kaab, the first Ambassador of Iraq in Estonia, also handed over his letters of credential in Kadriorg.

The Estonian Head of State reminded those present that the European Union supports the creation of a safe, stable and democratic Iraq and it has begun the preparations for signing a contract of partnership and co-operation. Estonia could assist in the sphere of information technology and, particularly, in e-governance and e-service.

The Ambassadors of the Republic of Zambia, Ms Anne Luzongo Mtamboh, and the State of Qatar, Mr. Hadi Nasser Mansour Al-Hajri, also handed over their letters of credentials today to

President Ilves.

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