

“We are recalling the day that deprived you of your home, for some your parents, and robbed you of your childhood and youth. Or more accurately, it is the day that made your youth more difficult, in a way than that is incomprehensible to us today,” said the Head of State, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, to several hundred victims of the deportation that took place on 14 June 1941, who had gathered in the President’s rose garden.

According to President Ilves, everyone in Estonia suffered in one way or another from the deportation and other crimes that were committed during the occupations. “Cruelty was banging at the doors of all Estonian homes; evil was about to break all hearts,” he said.

The Head of State reminded those present about how the deportations closely touched upon his own family, as everybody from his mother’s side was on the deportation list in summer 1941, but luckily they were warned. His great uncle, Hans Rebane, who was a diplomat, jumped into the sea from a prisoner ship and escaped, while his relatives from his father’s side were deported in 1949.

President Ilves acknowledged the stamina and strength that was demonstrated by his deported co-countrymen, who started over in Estonia after all the years spent in Siberia.

“You were no longer afraid, as you had encountered the biggest evil and had overcome it; you had conquered it. This set you off as an example for everyone. And this is what you do – what you are – today. Because in your presence it is rather difficult to complain about how tough or hard life is. No one but you has the moral right for such complaints,” the Head of State told. “I thank you in the name of the Republic of Estonia that you found the strength to keep on living and rise above evil and suffering. Let us commemorate, together, all of those innocent victims who did not meet a fate as merciful.”

Approximately 600 people who survived the deportation are alive today and are entered into the Estonian Memento Association list. They were invited to a reception by the President of the Republic.

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