

I bow my head in mourning and sorrow. As President of the Republic, I commemorate Mr. Tarmo Laul, a Leading Assistant with the Security Police, who served the Republic of Estonia loyally for 14 years and died while answering the call of duty. As a citizen of the Republic of Estonia, I feel pain at the tragic departure of such a young man, a good family man and a respected person.

My condolences and those of all of us go out to Tarmo Laul's wife, sons, next of kin, colleagues and friends. My condolences – and also my words of thanks go to you for having supported Tarmo Laul in his choices and his work, for having been his reliable companions.

Our policemen stand as a wall of defence between right and wrong, good and evil, the law and the violation thereof. They defend Estonia's security and safety against anything that may challenge it.

Here, by saying good-bye to security police officer Tarmo Laul, we know, once again, how dangerous this can be. Crimes take place behind a backdrop of a seemingly peaceful situation, and their detection and the search for the criminals may take the policemen, face to face, with blind rage as well as rage that is not easy to comprehend.

As a state will never be ready, we can also never neglect maintaining Estonia's safety and Estonia's security. Security policemen know this much better than many others do. This means that their daily work, commitment and vigilance is to ensure that Estonia and our people will be well protected.

Today, once again, we have a reason to see how serving one's country is a privilege, responsibility and, in several spheres of life – for defence force members, policemen, border guards, rescue workers – linked to the knowledge that one is taking a risk. People get used to this risk and learn to accept it, but not when we are standing next to a coffin draped with a flag of the Republic of Estonia.

Now, 20 policemen have fallen in Estonia in the past 20 years. This is almost equal to the size of a class at Paikuse Police School or the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences. Twenty lives

cut short at a young age. Let us reflect on this and how happy families are devastated, children become orphans and parents become heartbroken.

I repeat the words that I said one week ago on the day Mr. Tarmo Laul was killed – those who attack the officials that protect Estonia’s security and safety attack our country.

We all share in the obligation to remember the policemen who have served the Republic of Estonia and to take care of their families. They have fallen for all of us. Each and every one of us.

Tarmo Laul barely had the time to fit his home farm in Võrumaa with a new roof, all by himself. But there’s a lot to be done at the old house before the farm will look as Tarmo Laul dreamed. I am quite sure that his friends and colleagues will help to finish this work. Like the defence force members helped to finish the roof that their comrade who fell in Afghanistan started.

Even though one life has ended, others must go on living. Despite the mourning, sadness and aching soul. In the name of the memory of Mr. Tarmo Laul.

To borrow the words from one of his favourite bands, “Vennaskond”: at the end of the world there’s a cafe where we all will someday meet.

Although we did not know each other, I will still say, by using your first name: I thank you, Tarmo. Thank you for your life. Thank you for serving the Republic of Estonia.

We will not forget you. Æ

\*\*\*Ä

*The Head of State, Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves, gave orders to lower the flags in Kadriorg, in front of the building of the Office of the President, during the funeral service for Mr. Tarmo Laul today from 4 pm.*