

Address of the President of Latvia, Egils Levits, at the event hosted by Children of Siberia Foundation at the Riga Castle

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Egils Levits



Dear friends, members of the Children of Siberia Foundation, youngsters, ladies and gentlemen,

It seems that every day puts us further away from those tragic events that you and your families went through in 1940s and 50s. Latvian State had succumbed to the pressure of hostile foreign power, and people's lives had been cruelly and irreversibly broken and destroyed. However, these events are far from forgotten. Time may heal, but it cannot undo or erase the wrongdoings and crimes committed against people, nations and states.

As children, some of you were forced to go through the same torture and humiliation as adults deported far away from homeland. Upon your return home, to Latvia seized by occupation rule, you were forced to live under the heavy burden of Siberian deportee. A burden also placed on your children.

And then Latvia became free again.

Restoration of national independence has allowed us to restore the historical justice with respect to those repressed by the Soviet regime. Our constitution Satversme also says we commemorate victims of foreign powers, condemn the Communist and Nazi totalitarian regimes and their crimes.

This means we have a robust national collective memory policy. We do support historical research about our state and its people. And we do treat some events and process with special care, because they are essential for our national legitimacy, determining our interpretation of history and who we are.

Resistance to soviet occupation and collaboration with soviet regime belong to less researched chapters of our history. Soviet deportations and other USSR repressions are still less known and understood here at home, and internationally.

Dear participants,

People are the constituent and basic element of any state. We are all part of our country and state, our time and line of generations that follow each other. Now more than ever we are aware that every citizen of Latvia is important. No matter how small or big, young or old he or she is. We all must take care of Latvia and participate in national processes.

Children of Siberia Foundation is one of links in this line. A strong link bringing unique documentary evidence, missions exploring former deportation settlements and more public awareness about repressions. Today's people need to be strongly aware of what happened. Integrity of our collective memory also depends on that. Legitimacy of our state is based on that.

It is hugely important to continuously remind children and young people of the events that changed the course of history of our nation and state through essay and drawing competitions that encourage them to reflect on what children deported to Siberia might have experienced.

I want to specifically address the young people in this room.

You are the future of Latvia. Nobody knows what the future will bring to our country, but one thing is absolutely clear: it is up to you to keep children of Siberia and other events that took place back then in our national history.

I am confident that your beliefs will always reflect the experience of your ancestors, other children, your family members and relatives who shared these memories with you. We believe in you.

God bless Latvia!

<https://www.president.lv/en/article/address-president-latvia-egils-levits-event-hosted-children-siberia-foundation-riga-castle>