



Latvijas Republikas Valsts prezidenta kanceleja Prezidenta preses dienests

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Address of H.E. Dr. Vaira Vike-Freiberga in the opening ceremony of the Monument devoted to the Barricade Day participants at the Parliament building

Dear all,

Dear participants of the Barricade Days,

These hours and these days will remain recorded in the history as some of the noblest moments of the Latvian nation when in response to a call civilians from all over Latvia were ready to come and protect their reborn country, unarmed, with their own bodies coming up against the armed power of oppression and thus confirming that the nation has decided that it is no longer ready to live in such a way; that it is willing to turn a new page in the history and start a new life in the Republic of Latvia. That was also a signal to those who at that moment still believed that it would be possible to keep everything in the old way.

This year we also mark the anniversary of the upheaval of the Hungarian nation that took place 50 years ago. At that time the massive upheaval of the people was suppressed in the bloodiest way; it was grinded by tanks and merciless carnage against civilians. This time the Latvian nation was lucky that sufficient time had passed to let the world change, let the power of the Soviet system as well as its body and thinking change. However, the most important was that the Latvian people were ready at the moment when the wheel of history turned in our favour to go to the barricades and at this moment to stand on them with our flesh and blood and ready to shed the blood.

Thanks to all who were ready to do that then, our eternal remembrance to those who had to shed their blood. Thank God that we were lucky then and did not have more victims which might have been. Tonight we unveil this monument and I urge every inhabitant of Latvia to be proud of his nation, of the power of its will and its courage when passing the monument and also to remember that freedom is very dear. May in the pace of our daily lives each of us always remember to be worthy of this freedom! God, bless Latvia!