

**The written remarks of H.E. Ms Hagit Ben-Yaakov,  
Ambassador of the State of Israel to Finland and Estonia,  
on the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Soviet Union mass deportations in Estonia  
on 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2021**

Your Excellency, President of the Republic of Estonia, Kersti Kaljulaid,  
Chairman of the Jewish Community, Alla Jakobson,  
Chief Rabbi Shmuel Kot,  
Member of the Council, Eduard Claes-Glass,  
Maestro Andres Mustonen,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to address you on behalf of the State of Israel on the occasion of the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the June 1941 mass deportations to Siberia. I would like to thank the Estonian Jewish community for organizing this important ceremony and all of the distinguished guests for being here today. Let me also apologize that I could not join you personally this time due to the Covid restrictions.

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80 years ago, the tragic fate was sealed for over ten thousand Estonians who were brutally forced to move from their homeland to far away Siberia by Soviet security authorities.

Among those deported were over 400 Estonian Jews, which constituted a significant percentage of the local Jewish population at the time.

A large part of the victims were women and children, and many could not survive the harsh and inhumane conditions in forced labour camps and settlements.

While some were able to return back afterwards and continue their lives, 101 Estonian Jews, whose names are carved in this cemetery, never again saw their homes. May the memory of the victims be forever blessed.

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Unfortunately, atrocities against Jews did not stop with these deportations, but continued throughout the Soviet period and even worsened during the Nazi German occupation.

Nowadays, we are witnessing yet another wave of rising anti-Semitism against Jewish communities around the world.

In this respect, I would like to convey our great appreciation to the State of Estonia and the Estonian Jewish community for establishing a working group to fight anti-Semitism in this country.

Going back to the events of 1941, as a representative of a free and democratic State of Israel, I am proud to be part of this commemoration in order to ensure that these tragic events will never be forgotten.

Together, as an international community, we must continue to defend our shared values of freedom, democracy and respect for human rights, and stand up against totalitarianism and any form of discrimination, anti-Semitism and racism in our societies.

Only that way we can ensure that the history does not repeat itself.

Thank you.