



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia

Foreign Minister Maris Riekstins: it is immoral to 'weigh pain' of war victims' relatives

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In response to the questions from the media about his point of view on the recent opinions voiced by Efraim Zuroff, director of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre office in Israel, regarding the 16 March events in Latvia, Foreign Minister Maris Riekstins noted that any attempts to characterise the commemoration of fallen soldiers as the glorification of nazism are absolutely inadequate and unacceptable.

"Latvia is a democratic country with all the freedom guarantees provided for in the Constitution. Any totalitarian ideology is unacceptable for Latvia, and it has always condemned and will condemn the crimes of nazism and communism, and the holocaust, which do not have and cannot have a statute of limitations.

16 March is by no means a festive day, contrary to interpretations by certain radical groupings; it is a day to pay respect to the fallen soldiers.

I do not see any contradictions in, or obstacles to the fact that former soldiers on 16 March come together privately for remembrance gatherings dedicated to their fallen comrades-in-arms. Yesterday's events proved that the day was spent in a democratic and peaceful atmosphere, notwithstanding attempts by certain small radical groupings to use this day for their agenda and for boosting their political capital," Foreign Minister indicates.

"At the same time, attempts by E.Zuroff or anybody else to come forward with a division into those who have suffered less or suffered more, are unacceptable. I regard such 'weighing of pain' as immoral in relation to people whose relatives perished on both sides in the battlefield, in repressions by both totalitarian regimes, in nazi camps or being deported to Siberia," Minister Riekstins underlines.

(End of text)

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