

*Prime Minister
Republic of Estonia*

Tallinn, 30 July 2010

Mr. Richard B. Stone
Mr. Alexander Smukler
Mr. Mark B. Levin

In July and August 1944, the area known as Sinimäed ('blue hills') was the site of the biggest battles in Estonia's history. Up to 200,000 people are thought to have lost their lives in the battles, which changed the face of the area completely. Such a tragic historical event must not be forgotten.


The public meeting in the area on 31 July 2010 is the latest in what has become an annual memorial event (which began in 1994) to the frontline soldiers who died in World War II: it does not extol the virtues of any occupying force and is not a gathering of the Waffen-SS as a criminal organisation. Any attempt to glorify occupying regimes and the crimes against humanity which they committed is strictly prohibited at the event.

The Nuremberg Trials declared the SS (including the Waffen-SS) a criminal organisation, **although the ruling did not extend to those forcefully recruited into its ranks**. According to the ruling of the Nuremberg tribunal, this included those individuals mobilised, against international law, by the occupying forces on the territory of the occupied Republic of Estonia. The ruling of the Displaced Persons Commission in the United States of America of 1 September 1950 reads: "The Baltic Waffen S.S. Units (Baltic Legions) are to be considered as separate and distinct in purpose, ideology, activities, and qualifications for membership from the German S.S., and therefore the Commission holds them not to be a movement hostile to the Government of the United States under Section 13 of the Displaced Persons Act [...]."

In regard to your alluding to the involvement of members of the Estonian government in the memorial event held in the Sinimäed area, I can assure you that the government is in no way connected to the organisation of the event and that none of its members plans to take part in it.

The Republic of Estonia has repeatedly, and at the highest level, condemned both of the totalitarian regimes which occupied Estonia as well as the crimes against humanity perpetrated by their henchmen. Estonia has done and will continue to do everything within its power to ensure that the crimes against humanity witnessed in the 20th century do not recur here or anywhere else in the world. That is why we are working hand in hand with the United States and our other democratic partners to promote freedom and security in Afghanistan, the Balkans, Iraq and elsewhere.

Sincerely,



Advocates on behalf of Jews in Russia,
Ukraine, the Baltic States & Eurasia
National Conference on Soviet Jewry
WASHINGTON