



NEWSLETTER

14 June “Hope Angel” flew over Lithuania

To commemorate the night of 14 June 1941, when massive deportations of Lithuanian residents to Russia were started, Lithuania’s Day of Mourning and Hope is marked. According to the research conducted by the historians of the International Commission and its findings confirmed in 2003, during the first deportations 17 500 Lithuanian citizens were deported, 2 045 of them were Jews and 1576 Poles. There were 5 060 minors younger than 16 among the deportees. Grown up exiles represented political, military and economic elite of Lithuania.

The mass deportations of Lithuanian citizens began on 14 June 1941, 75 years ago. Every year we have less and less witnesses who remember the events of that night. To preserve and convey historical memory from generation to generation the Secretariat of the International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania every year initiates civic incentives aimed at general education institutions. “Hope Angel” is a symbol of Day of Mourning and Hope this year. School communities were suggested to create angels which symbolise unending believe, hope, which helped to survive deported and imprisoned people. Students were encouraged to get acquainted with the memories of former exiles and political prisoners and have discussions on the things which helped to survive harsh conditions in Siberia and come back to their Motherland.





Traditionally two commemorative events were held in Vilnius: in Auku street and next to Naujoji Vilnia Railway Station Memorial. The representatives from 7 Vilnius schools carrying symbolic “Hope Angels” arrived at the official commemoration ceremony. The events were also attended by the guests from Kaunas Juozas Grušas Gymnasium and Varėna “Ažuolas” Gymnasium TECs. By the invitation of the Chairman of the International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania Emanuelis Zingeris Jamala of Ukraine, the winner of Eurovision 2016, arrived in Lithuania to perform in a concert for the Day of Mourning and Hope in Vilnius, and also some prominent Eastern Europe region politicians, that played influential role at the breakdown of the Soviet Union: a leader of Belarusian Opposition Stanislav Shushkevich and Ukrainian politician Leonid Kravchuk took part in the ceremony at Auku street. The Chairman of the International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania, the signatory of the Act of the Re-Establishment of the State of Lithuania Emanuelis Zingeris in his speech expressed his gratitude to former deportees and political prisoners for their hope in independence even when it seemed that it was impossible to believe in it.





Naujoji Vilnia event was attended by Vilnius Virsuliskės School and Varėna “Ažuolas” Gymnasium students and teachers. The students not only decorated the hill with the angels, but also shared them with former deportees, political prisoners and attendees of the event.



Civic incentive “Hope Angel” was carried out through the whole Lithuania. Around 190 schools in Lithuania organised some commemorative events in their cities and towns. Thousands of Hope Angels created by students encouraged people to remember the history and mark the Day of Mourning and Hope. Some commemorative events were held at schools and some of them gained momentum and involved both school and local communities.





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