



**AMBASSADE
DE FRANCE
EN ESTONIE**

*Liberté
Égalité
Fraternité*

N°

Tallinn, le 06/03/2026

Dear Minister,

The opening of the Patarei prison to the public is planned for 2027, nearly 10 years after the Estonian government's decision to create a museum in its stead. This memorial project, designed to condemn the crimes committed by totalitarian regimes, is of outmost importance. It is a welcome reminder of the task we must collectively and constantly uphold : keeping alive the memory of all victims of terror.

Establishing a museum dedicated to the victims of the Soviet and Nazi regimes at the very place where those regimes were operating is a strong symbol. Yet, the restrictive label « *International Musuem for the Victims of Communism* » has, to our knowledge, been retained for this institution.

The future Museum will have a specific area dedicated to the victims of the Holocaust. The Patarei prison was the final arrival point of 300 of the Jewish deportees of Convoy 73, which left Drancy in France on May 15th 1944 to Lithuania and Estonia. They lived in inhumane conditions, were forced to perform slave labor, and some of them were executed.

Among them were André and Jean Jacob, father and brother of Simone Veil, first Chairwoman of the European Parliament (1979 – 1982) and Minister in France. Only 22 returned.

On this matter, it is therefore essential to bring action into words. The name of the Museum should reflect its whole history, and not only the evils of the Soviet communist regime.

The Patarei prison has witnessed the most horrendous crimes from both the Soviet and Nazi regimes. Under those totalitarian regimes, hundreds of thousands of innocent people were killed, executed, imprisoned, tortured, and deported. To that extent, the history of the Patarei prison is not limited to the victims of communism, nor to the victims of nazis. It is a site of plural memory. Erasing this singularity and dismissing the Jewish victims goes against the core purpose of the institution, which is to preserve the duty of transmission, by helping understand the inhuman nature of all totalitarian regimes.

By asking you to relabel the Museum either as the International Museum for the Victims of Communism and Nazism or as The International Museum for the Victims of Totalitarian Regimes, we do not deny its portrayal of Soviet terror, we abide by a simple rule : the imperative need to preserve the traces of the victims of all terrors. The singularity of each memory has to be showed, in order not to be denied.

We hope that the name of the institution will be reconsidered, in order to fulfill the original ambition of the International Museum : transmitting memory, so that horror shall never occur again.

Justiits- ja Digiministeerium

06.04.2025

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Minister of Justice
Liisa-Ly Pakosta

Copy :
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Margus Tsahkna
Director of the Estonian Institute of Historical Memory