



European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Totalitarian Regimes

Remarks by Deputy Chief of Mission Gautam Rana

August 23, 2016 – 5:30 p.m.

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Today, August 23rd, marks the European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes. It also marks the date of the 1939 signing of the infamous Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union which effectively paved the way for the senseless deaths of millions of people.

We gather here to honor and grieve for all Slovenians and their neighbors who suffered under fascism, Nazism, and communism and to honor all who sought peace but could not avoid war.

As President Obama said last month “This is a challenging time--with threats of terrorism, an international order that is buffeted by all different kinds of events...all of this creates legitimate fears and anxieties that have to be addressed, and at least a feeling, a perception that people don't have full control over a rapidly changing world. So it is worth reminding ourselves of how lucky we are to be living in the most peaceful, most prosperous, most progressive era in human history.”

“Now, that's hard to absorb if we're watching the newscasts every night, because there's heartbreak and terrible things taking place at any given moment across the globe. But it's important for us to remember, not so that we become complacent but so that we understand that good works can make a difference.”

So, as we honor and grieve the victims today, let us also honor and celebrate those who honestly seek reconciliation. Let us celebrate all who fought for and still strive to preserve Slovenia's independence and identity. And let us celebrate the courage, compassion, and decency of the Slovenian people.