



BUNDESPRÄSIDENTIALAMT

Berlin, 28.09.2016

**His Excellency Reuven Rivlin
President of the State of Israel
Jerusalem**

Mr President,

Following the death of former President Shimon Peres, allow me to convey to you and the people of Israel my heartfelt condolences and those of my fellow Germans.

Shimon Peres shaped Israel to a degree almost unparalleled by any other politician, serving his country in various functions, with firm principles as regards Israel's security, and with a strong desire to advance the peace process with the Palestinians. His tireless efforts to achieve peace and understanding were rewarded with that highest distinction, the Nobel Peace Prize. His term as President was the crowning conclusion of his political career in the service of the State of Israel.

We Germans will in particular remember his willingness to engage in reconciliation. In spite of the atrocities suffered by his family and his people at German hands during the Holocaust, Shimon Peres reached out to us. For that we owe him our heartfelt thanks. We will not forget his address to the German Bundestag on 27 January 2010, in which he stressed the unique nature of the friendship between Germany and Israel.

I recall with pleasure the warm welcome Shimon Peres gave me on my state visit to Israel in 2012. On that occasion we spoke about the significance of meetings between young people for German-Israeli relations, and for the Middle East peace process. Shimon Peres attached particular importance to such exchange. His life dedicated to peace and reconciliation can serve as an example to young people.

With the passing of Shimon Peres, Israel has lost a great statesman and Germany a loyal friend. We will honour his memory.

Yours sincerely,

Joachim Gauck

President of the Federal Republic of Germany

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