



Bessastaðir,
9. October 2020

**Address
by the President of Iceland,
Guðni Th. Jóhannesson**

Dear people of Iceland

“People who never join forces to lift a burden, will never be a nation.” These are the words of Jóhannes Kjarval, our great artist. Now we must join forces to lift a great burden. We must achieve the same unity which served us so well last spring. Yes, we must stand together – but two metres apart. Let us comply with that rule, and wash our hands thoroughly, wear masks where appropriate, and familiarise ourselves with the guidance on the covid.is website – available in eleven languages.

Let us also express our thanks to those who have earned our gratitude. They belong to more professions and groups than I can include here – in the fields of health and care, education and law enforcement, commerce and services, and many more. But: we thank you all, again and again.

I know that many of us are tired of the pandemic and the whole situation. I know of many people who are in a difficult position, and anxiety and unease are widespread. But I think, on the other hand, that most of us are aware that if we break the chain of defence against the disease, we will also be breaking the ties that bind us together – make us a nation, make us a society.

I have said it before, and I’ll say it again: we have seen worse times, we will see better times. Later in this century, young children will ask their grandparents: What did you do in the COVID-19 pandemic? And then it will be good to reply: I did my best, I took my own precautions; I was considerate of others; I tried to be part of the solution, not the problem.

I wish you all well, dear people of Iceland. Let us stand together.