

Andreas Meyer, Vice president of the International Sachsenhausen Committee

Dear Survivors of the Sachsenhausen concentration camp,
Dear Friends,
Dear Madams, dear Sirs,

Nothing is the way it was this year, nothing is the way it should be this year... It is during these recent days that a large number of survivors of the Sachsenhausen concentration camp along with their relatives wanted to gather with us to commemorate and remember together.

Due to the current global pandemic, this is unfortunately not possible. We regret this very much and hope that our friends from many countries around the world are healthy and unite with us during these hours, if not physically, then at least in spirit via the Internet.

Almost exactly to the day, 75 years ago, on 22 April 1945, the Sachsenhausen concentration camp was liberated by members of the Soviet and Polish armies. The soldiers found about 3000 sick and frail prisoners. Thousands of others had been driven north on 20 and 21 April 1945, on the Death March. Today we commemorate the people who were here at the Sachsenhausen camp with its more than 60 external commandos and subcamps and those on the Death March, who were imprisoned, tortured, mistreated and murdered based on their political worldview, their religious affiliation, their ancestry, their view of life, their sexual orientation or origin.

Upon entering the camp, the people became numbers. The SS wanted to rob them of their human dignity. Human dignity is and remains inviolable - that is why it is important today to give back to those countless people a piece of their identity, so that the many numbers become names again, people again. Aside from the commemoration days such as these, we have to ensure together that we preserve for the future the memorial sites that are found in their true locations such as Sachsenhausen. They are European memorial sites. They are European cemeteries.

Sachsenhausen is not only a place of mourning, of remembrance and admonition - Sachsenhausen has become an important and active museum and a place of learning, education and forming values. Places like Sachsenhausen are important for our society, so that together we never forget where contempt for humankind, anti-Semitism, antiziganism and homophobia can lead. This place should be a permanent reminder to us - never again!