

„Didn't we say never again?“

Never again war. Never again fascism. Stand up for peace.

80th anniversary of the liberation of Mauthausen concentration camp and its subcamps

2025 marks the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Mauthausen concentration camp and its numerous satellite camps. Each year, the annual commemoration and liberation ceremonies within the network of Mauthausen Committee Austria (MKÖ) remember the horrendous crimes of the Nazi regime and commemorate the victims who suffered and lost their lives in these camps.

This year's theme, 'Working together to make "Never again" a reality', not only underlines the historic aspect of these remembrance events, but also issues a rallying call to keep the lessons of the past alive for the present and the future.

Mauthausen concentration camp and its many satellite camps were the scenes of unthinkable acts of cruelty, in the form of forced labour, hunger and mass murder. People from across Europe were victims here of an inhuman regime based on hate, racism and political persecution. The liberation of the survivors by the Allied Forces in May 1945 marked the end of one of the darkest chapters in European history. It also marked the start of a difficult process of accounting for the past and of a new beginning, where peace, freedom and democracy were central values.

In the days following their liberation, the survivors of Mauthausen concentration camp and its satellite camps swore an oath of 'Never again'. In 2000, the survivors' legacy was passed to Mauthausen Committee Austria (MKÖ). In addition to commemorating the victims and doing remembrance work, the MKÖ and its local initiatives pursue a common goal: that this should never happen again.

The call of 'Never again' is more relevant today than ever. Anti-Semitism, racism, extremism and authoritarian tendencies are experiencing an alarming resurgence in Austria and many parts of the world. The sharp rise in anti-Semitism in particular is currently cause for concern, especially among young people, who are active on social media platforms such as TikTok. Anti-Semitic content spreads quickly on these social media platforms and reaches a wide, often uncritical target group. These platforms provide a forum for hate speech and conspiracy theories, which are often packaged as humorous or apparently harmless clips, reinforcing their impact on this young generation. The spread of anti-Semitism in this context represents a serious threat to social cohesion and there is an urgent need for increased education and preventive measures to counteract the normalisation of these kinds of hate ideologies.

Poverty is not just an economic hardship but it is also a fundamental violation of social rights and it remains widespread in many parts of the world. At the same time, wars and conflicts are exacerbating social inequality and leading to humanitarian crises. Commitment to social human rights is inextricably linked to the quest for world peace.

It is important that we fight for the creation of a fairer society where education, health and fair working conditions are accessible for everyone. In order to combat poverty and injustice, we need to address the underlying causes of conflicts and social exclusion. Achieving this will not only take international cooperation but also the active involvement of each individual in promoting a solidarity-based and inclusive world order where social human rights are upheld and implemented.

Remembering Mauthausen and the other places where atrocities were committed is not just a memorial to the past but a warning for the future: it is our responsibility to stand up for a society that is based on peace, tolerance and human rights. History must never be allowed to repeat itself.

This year's international liberation and commemoration ceremonies are therefore combining commemorating the victims with an urgent appeal to all generations: peace is not a given. It needs to be defended and promoted daily. Let's ensure together that Mauthausen and the atrocities of the Nazi regime are not forgotten and that the fight for a fairer and more peaceful world is continued – in the spirit of 'Never again'!