

Two podcast statements for the Minister to mark the commemorative events in Ravensbrück and Sachsenhausen

(1) Ravensbrück

Dear Ms. Laurenzi,
(President of the International Ravensbrück Committee)
Dear Survivors of Ravensbrück
Dear Dr. Eschebach,
Dear Sir/Madam,

While the rapeseed bloomed, not far from the city of Fürstenberg the Ravensbrück concentration camp for women opened its doors. The Nazi regime transported the first 900 women to the new camp in May of 1939. Over the next few years, there followed 132,000 women and children and 20,000 men from at least 40 different countries. They all traversed this historic site: the camp gate. This is where everything changed for these people. Once the prisoners had passed through the camp gate, they faced the SS wardens, bright lights, dogs, striped clothing, shouting. At the beginning, it was single deaths – the individuals. One person became several. The fate of the individual was resigned at the camp gate.

Several thousand were murdered at the Ravensbrück concentration camp. Many of the names are lost. All that remains of them are the memories of the survivors. As the generation that was born after this era, it is our duty to not turn the other cheek. We must carry on the memories and move forward – even if today it will be a digital commemoration for many.

I would like to thank the survivors for their engagement in talking to young people and taking part in historical and political efforts to educate. I would also like to express my appreciation for the work of the Ravensbrück Place of Remembrance and Commemoration, for all those who work or volunteer their time here.

In the end, one fact remains: the past serves as a reminder for us. We are responsible not only for our own actions but also for the things we allow to happen.