

75th anniversary of the liberation of the Dachau concentration camp, April 29, 2020

Written address of Dr. Markus Söder, Minister President of Bavaria

Dachau was the first concentration camp to be set up by the Nazis in Germany. It was the gruesome sign of the beginning of an unprecedented reign of terror. Of the 200,000 or more persons from across Europe who were imprisoned here between 1933 and 1945, over 40,000 were murdered or died a terrible death.

75 years ago the Dachau concentration camp was liberated by American troops. The people of the world were forced to acknowledge the crimes motivated by anti-Semitism, racism and totalitarianism.

The memorial sites keep the memory of this crime against humanity alive. They are an essential element in our living culture of remembrance: On the actual grounds of the former concentration camp the atrocities that mankind is capable of committing are directly revealed. This is where the mission to condemn all forms of disrespect for human dignity becomes so evident, also highlighting the importance to fight against it with all legitimate means.

Sadly, at present, we have to realise that not everyone has learned from history. Right-wing activists are intolerably distorting historical facts, mocking the suffering of victims and seeking to poison the social climate. We are taking vigorous action to stem these activities.

We are all called upon, now more than ever, to stand up for human dignity, freedom, democracy and the rule of law. Memory lays the foundation for us to do this. We accept and take up this responsibility – now and for the years to come!

In reverence we remember all the victims who perished under the terror regime of National Socialism. Their fate remains a perpetual reminder and admonition – an ongoing commitment.