Toespraak Dr. Nikolaus Meyer-Landrut, Ambassadeur Duitsland, 11 oktober 2024 Nationaal Monument Kamp Amersfoort

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It fills me with great humility to speak to you today at Kamp Amersfoort.

Here, we remember the 47,000 people who were imprisoned at Kamp Amersfoort and sent on to other concentration camps, from which most never returned.

This place is representative of the unimaginable atrocities committed throughout Europe by Germany.

On Monday of this week, the 7th of October, I was profoundly moved and shaken by the commemoration in Amsterdam of the terrible terror attack from Hamas in Israel one year ago. And I listened to the two relatives of Israeli hostages still after one year in the hands of the Hamas terrorists.

And on Wednesday of this week, I visited the new Holocaust Museum and the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam. And I also learned about their many educational efforts which I can only commend.

And today I am here with you to remember the largest transport that took place 80 years ago: 1,438 men, of whom less than twenty percent made it back home to their families.

Being here at Nationaal Monument Kamp Amersfoort is another sobering moment, a place that stands for the terrible atrocities of that time and the depths to which humanity can sink.

This work of remembrance and education is so vital. It ensures that the lessons of history are not forgotten and that we all fully understand the weight of our shared responsibility. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the memorial site here at Nationaal Monument Kamp

Amersfoort and to everyone who dedicates themselves to preserving the memory of the victims. Your commitment is invaluable, and your work is a cornerstone in preventing such atrocities from ever happening again.

At the same time, it gives hope to realize that even in such cruel times, people were capable of great good. This is exemplified by the resistance of thousands of doctors who refused to treat people according to National Socialist ideology. Even doctors imprisoned in the Amersfoort camp came together under these inhumane conditions to alleviate the suffering of their fellow human beings.

This unique form of resistance offers us hope. Those who risked or even sacrificed their lives to help others show us that there are always glimmers of light even in humanity’s darkest hours.

What also gives me hope is seeing and feeling that despite all the unimaginable suffering caused by even more unimaginable atrocities, the return to mutual trust and human solidarity is possible. Today’s German-Dutch and German-Israeli relations are a living example of this. The fact that I, as a representative of Germany, have not only been invited here today but also have the honor of speaking to you, is an illustration of this.

Working and remembering together is proof that we can learn from history.

And with this understanding, we all bear a great responsibility: we must do everything in our power to ensure that such crimes and cruelties never happen again. And: "never again" means "now"!

We must be vigilant and take decisive action now against all forms of antisemitism, of xenophobia as well as intolerance. The memory of the victims of Nationaal Monument Kamp Amersfoort reminds us that we must never forget.

Let us work together to ensure that the memory of the victims endures, and that the lessons of this history accompany us into the future.

Thank you very much.