

Press release

The Arolsen Archives are uploading more than 13 million documents about Nazi persecution online

People from all over the world can now conduct research online to discover the fates of victims of National Socialist persecution: the Arolsen Archives have published a new online archive in partnership with the World Holocaust Remembrance Center, Yad Vashem (<https://collections.arolsen-archives.org/en/>). The database contains a comprehensive collection of documents from concentration camps, including prisoner cards and death notices. The more than 13 million documents featuring information on over 2.2 million people persecuted by the Nazi Regime are part of the UNESCO's World Documentary Heritage and are a key focus of the collection of the Arolsen Archives. This database is the first of several large collections scheduled to go online in future.

"Our archive bears testimony to the atrocities perpetrated by the National Socialists. Soon there won't be any survivors left to tell us about them. That is why it is so important that the original documents can speak to coming generations in their place," Floriane Azoulay, Director of the Arolsen Archives, uses these words to describe the significance of the online archive. Coinciding with the publication of the documents, the institution founded by the Allies under the name "International Tracing Service" is changing its name to "Arolsen Archives - International Center on Nazi Persecution". A new corporate image and a modern website complete with online archive aim to reach out to a larger audience and inform more people about the consequences of anti-Semitism, discrimination and racism.

Partnership with Yad Vashem

Since 2015, the Arolsen Archives have uploaded a number of small collections, always with the ultimate aim of making larger collections available to the public in the future. In addition to the collection of data and metadata built up over decades, what was needed was a platform powerful enough to manage the task. Yad Vashem offered to take care of the technical side with the overall aim of augmenting Holocaust documentation and making it available worldwide. The joint project utilizes Yad Vashem's state-of-the-art technology for fast data management and extended place and name search. The result is an easily accessible, user-friendly online archive.

A r o l s e n A r c h i v e s

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"For nearly half a century Yad Vashem has been working closely with the Arolsen Archives. Already in the 1950's Yad Vashem scanned a copy of the documentation from the then International Tracing Service, in order to have better access to information about the fate of the Jewish victims. The current partnership with Arolsen Archives leverages Yad Vashem's technical and professional capabilities with Arolsen Archives assets in order to enhance Holocaust research and study," said Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev.

Search functionality will be further improved

The millions of documents from the Nazi bureaucracy which have now been published provide information about the victims of persecution and about the camp system implemented by the National Socialists. Many documents have been indexed in such a way that they can be accessed directly when a name is entered. However, in some cases this does not work yet. "In this initial phase, it was important to make the documents available", explains Floriane Azoulay. "We are now working continuously with various partners on improving searchability. We are using a number of different tools, including state-of-the-art text recognition methods."

<https://collections.arolsen-archives.org/en/>

About the Arolsen Archives

The Arolsen Archives are an international center on Nazi persecution with the world's most comprehensive archive on the victims and survivors of National Socialism. The collection has information on about 17.5 million people and belongs to the UNESCO's Memory of the World. It contains documents on the various victim groups targeted by the Nazi regime and is an important source of knowledge for society today.