

Press Release

The Arolsen Archives bid farewell to Director Floriane Azoulay

Bad Arolsen, 19.12.2025. Floriane Azoulay will conclude her tenure as Director of the Arolsen Archives at the end of the year. Under her leadership over the past decade, the world's largest archive on the victims and survivors of Nazi persecution has evolved into a digitally oriented and innovative institution with a far-reaching impact on society.

The International Commission, the governing body of the Arolsen Archives, paid tribute to the achievements of the French human rights expert: "We take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to Floriane Azoulay for her exceptional leadership over the past decade. Under her guidance, the Arolsen Archives evolved into a digital, user-focused, and globally connected institution, ensuring its relevance for future generations. Ms. Azoulay has combined the mission of historical preservation with a consistent focus on digital accessibility, modernization, and outreach to younger generations. Her guiding principle was to bring knowledge out of the archive and into society – as accessible, verifiable evidence of Nazi crimes at a time when eyewitnesses can no longer give testimony themselves."

Reflecting on her tenure, Ms. Azoulay summed up her approach in one defining sentence: "My aim was to let the documents speak – as the voices of the victims, as historical evidence, and as a reliable compass in an era of disinformation and historical distortion."

Digital access and education

With this vision, Ms. Azoulay championed the development of modern, multimedia educational work that places historical documents in new social contexts and reaches younger audiences. Central to this effort is the Arolsen Archives' online archive, which now contains around 40 million documents. By putting these records online – recognized by UNESCO as part of the Memory of the World – the Arolsen Archives have become a global pioneer in providing virtually unrestricted access to historical archives. The online archive is now used by around 800,000 people worldwide each year. For many people, access to these records is of deep emotional significance: they uncover previously unknown aspects of their family history, find answers to long-held questions – or discover new ones. Teachers and staff at concentration camp memorial sites increasingly draw on these documents for their work.

International crowdsourcing initiatives

Through projects such as #everynamecounts and #StolenMemory, the Arolsen Archives under Floriane Azoulay's leadership have strengthened global engagement with the legacy of Nazi persecution. Nearly 400,000 people have already participated in #everynamecounts, helping to digitize millions of documents. At the same time, the #StolenMemory initiative, with the support of numerous volunteers, has found over 1,000 families to return personal belongings confiscated from former concentration camp prisoners. Both projects make remembrance more visible, open up new ways of learning about history, and contribute to a digital monument that is growing all the time.

Addressing challenges with integrity

Looking back on the year 2023, the International Commission draws the following conclusion: "Ms. Azoulay demonstrated resilience and professionalism during a period of unfounded allegations against her. Following a thorough independent legal inquiry, she and her deputy were fully exonerated. The Commission regrets the impact these anonymous claims had on her personally and acknowledges lessons learned."

International recognition

Under Ms. Azoulay's leadership, the Arolsen Archives have received numerous awards for their innovative digital work and educational projects, including the European Heritage Award, the Grimme Online Award, and the ADC Award. These honors highlight the significance and quality of the organization's digital transformation and educational work.

The future

The International Commission emphasizes the positive outlook for the future: "We look forward to building on the solid foundation laid by Ms. Azoulay over the last decade, which transformed the Arolsen Archives from a traditional tracing service into a global digital hub for Holocaust remembrance, combining cutting-edge technology, participatory projects, and humanitarian missions to keep memory alive and relevant for future generations."

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

International Center
on Nazi Persecution

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About the Arolsen Archives:

The Arolsen Archives are the world's largest archive on the victims and survivors of Nazi persecution. The collection has information on about 17.5 million people and belongs to 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.

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