

UPF Austria's Peace Festival Honoring World War II Jewish Mauthausen Victims

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On November 17, 2024, Austria UPF held a special peace festival in the village of Parndorf to commemorate Jewish and other groups who were civilian victims before and during World War II as a result of a policy of marginalization. The event marked the 79th anniversary of the liberation of the Mauthausen concentration camp and the end of World War II, coinciding with various commemorative events throughout Austria.



UPF Chairman Hans Rechberger, serving as MC, emphasized the importance of a 'culture of remembrance' in his opening address. He stated that "True peace must be founded on True Parents' words of 'living for the sake of others,' and we must move forward on the path of love and reconciliation for peace."

The program continued with a peace prayer led by a Catholic priest of St. Francis, followed by remarks from the Mayor of Parndorf. The mayor addressed the current crisis situation in Europe and emphasized the importance of reconciliation, noting that "small efforts together can lead to big changes."

The event concluded with a moving performance by the Parndorf Tamburizza Orchestra, which elevated the atmosphere and deeply touched all attendees.

Three mayors from nearby villages joined the festival, along with local leaders, various politicians, and more than 50 Parndorf residents who shared messages of peace and reconciliation. Together, they took their first steps toward a peaceful future, pledging to continue on the path of reconciliation and cooperation.

This festival built upon a memorial event held the previous year for Parndorf victims of National Socialism, where Johann Rechberger had contributed with an exhibition about women under the Nazi regime at the local school, which was attended by over 100 locals. The local newspaper featured a full-page article about the event, helping to spread its message of peace and remembrance.