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The Bergen-Belsen Survivors organization in Israel expresses serious concern about the the elections in Nordhausen, Germany

The Bergen-Belsen Survivors organization in Israel - the largest and most active of its kind in the world, and many of whose survivors came from Mittelbau-Dora - expresses its concern about the upcoming elections in Nordhausen and clarifies that cooperation with far-right German politicians is impossible

The elections in Nordhausen for a new mayor will take place on September 10, and it is feared that the candidate of the far-right AfD Jörg Prophet will be elected. For the Mittelbau-Dora Memorial and thus also for the Buchenwald and Mittelbau-Dora Memorials Foundation, this would be a disaster. Two weeks ago, Jörg Prophet appeared as a speaker at a summer festival of the far-right and anti-Semitic magazine Compact - amid neo-Nazis and so-called "Reich citizens". In the press, he justified this by saying that he was open in all directions. Jörg Prophet is not a Holocaust denier, but a historical revisionist. He wrote on Facebook that he does not consider May 8, 1945, as the day of liberation, but as the day of defeat, which stands for German suffering. He has also written about the so-called "cult of guilt," a popular term of right-wing historical revisionism. Most recently, he also campaigned against the dignified redesign of the Nordhausen cemetery of honor, where 2,000 dead concentration camp prisoners and forced laborers were buried in April 1945, including many Jews.

If he wins the elections and is elected mayor, it would be unthinkable to allow Jörg Prophet to participate in events at the Mittelbau-Dora memorial site. We have no doubt that the former prisoners of the Mittelbau-Dora concentration camp and their relatives will no longer set foot in the Nordhausen town hall if the far-right AfD rules there. Unfortunately, the AfD candidate does not have much opposition from the public. By the way, the leader of Jörg Prophet's Thuringian party is Björn Höcke, who has already appeared in several anti-Semitic shows and is known as the one who called for a "180-degree turnaround in the memory policy".

We call on the Government of Israel, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Center for the Organizations of Holocaust Survivors and the Holocaust institutions in Israel, to raise a voice of protest against such a distorted situation. We call on the municipality of Beit Shemesh - the twin city of Nordhausen - to take a serious step.

We expect the German ambassador in Israel and the German federal government to open their eyes to understand the magnitude of the disaster they are walking into with open eyes, to publicly express their fear and take appropriate steps. We are all waiting for their immediate response.

(Mrs.) Jochi Ritz-Olewski, chair of the organization