



**53. MOERS**  
**FESTIVAL**  
**17. - 20.05.2024**

MAY 20TH, 2024

## **MOERS FESTIVAL 2024: CLOSING REMARKS**

**TIM ISFORT, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR**

At the risk – is it indeed too risky!? – of not being able to find the right words here. At the risk of being misinterpreted. At the risk of being wilfully misrepresented or misquoted. At the risk of hurting the feelings of people of one mind or another.

But: if we see ourselves as a festival, as a jazz festival for music, sense-ification, politics, superheroes and true togetherness, and if we take the great humanist, pacifist, keen observer and all-around "mensch" Hanns Dieter Hüsch (aka Captain Niederrhein) as our role model here (or if we simply look at, listen to or read his texts, thoughts or poems), then we can't help but speak up about the following situation, solely from the point-of-view of our shared humanity – and I say this here totally personally, as my opinion, which is also shared by large parts of the team.

First though, before continuing, I would like to add that it hurts me just as much not to be able to speak adequately or draw attention here to the situations in Ukraine, Myanmar, Somalia, Congo, Afghanistan, Iran, Eritrea, Ethiopia – the list is endless – and the suffering of individuals in many other regions torn by armed conflict and civil war.

In preparing this festival edition, we attempted to count the conflicts raging in this world – and couldn't even agree on how many there are in the end. In any case, there are so many that our four festival days would not even be enough time to name or come to terms with them all adequately. And yet we didn't want this festival to go by without saying how much the conflict involving Israel, the Gaza Strip and the Palestinians touches, preoccupies and also overwhelms us.

I don't know how you are feeling. It is incredibly complicated, ambivalent and difficult to really develop a completely clear position on the issue. We have tried to express such a position in writing in our program booklet. Following the terror attacks by Hamas on 7 October 2023, where 1139 people were horrifically murdered, as many

as 40,000 Palestinians have been killed to date as a result of Israeli attacks and many more than 60,000 have been injured – and the numbers are growing.

However, the big picture also includes the situation for Jewish individuals in Germany, who currently can no longer feel safe without hiding their identities. Jewish people in positions of responsibility can also no longer appear in public without massive personal security (at times with three bodyguards for every single individual). This is simply absolutely unacceptable in Germany in 2024.

Though, in the scope of this year's festival, it may be true that several artists expressed one-sided positions with calls for a "Free Palestine", calls that were also met with considerable applause from the audience, this does not correspond to our view as a festival and it is also not my personal conviction or opinion, and we distance ourselves in this case from individual statements made here by individual artists.

If we wish to emphasize above all the "superpower" of our common humanity at this festival, then the first (and perhaps only) thing that we can do is to acknowledge the unfathomable suffering on both sides.

On 7 October in Israel, families, children, babies and festivalgoers were murdered in the most gruesome way imaginable. And in the Gaza Strip, four-year-old children are now burying their own parents because there is no one else left to do it.

It's about acknowledging the unfathomable suffering of the humans on both sides. If we didn't say this loud and clear at least once at this festival, we would most likely be ashamed later that we failed to do it now, in 2024.

Or, to quote our dear old friend Herr Hüscher himself:  
"...and that's all I wanted to say here in Moers."

Tim Isfort



Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung  
für Kultur und Medien

Ministerium für  
Kultur und Wissenschaft  
des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen



STADT MOERS

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