

PRESS STATEMENT

Higher Regional Court in Cologne: Clear Standpoint regarding the Rightful Ownership of the Unique Annemarie Kusserow Archive

Cologne, October 1, 2026 – Jehovah's Witnesses welcome the clear position taken by the 18th Civil Senate of the Higher Regional Court of Cologne. At the hearing, the court follows the view of the Federal Court of Justice (BGH), which remitted the case to Cologne in June. According to the court, the Bundeswehr Military History Museum in Dresden cannot rely on having acquired the archive in good faith. Annemarie Kusserow was the sole owner of the archive, and Jehovah's Witnesses are her rightful heir.

The court encouraged the parties to pursue the settlement proposal that Jehovah's Witnesses had put forward during the proceedings before the Federal Court of Justice. If no settlement is reached, the court is expected to deliver its judgment on 19 November 2026.

Jehovah's Witnesses around the world are following this case with great interest. They hope the outcome will honor Annemarie Kusserow's final wishes and allow her archive to be returned to the religious community. The archive bears powerful witness both to the persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses under National Socialism and to the power of faith in the face of extreme pressure. Once returned, it can be preserved, exhibited, and made accessible to the public.

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