PRESS RELEASE  
  
Roman Kent, the President of the International Auschwitz Committee, died today in New York at the age of 92, following a brief, severe illness. Roman Kent was born in 1929 in Lodz as a son of the Jewish Kniker family which owned a textile factory in that city. At the end of 1939, after the invasion of Poland by the German Wehrmacht, the Kniker family was forced into the ghetto along with the other Jewish families in Lodz, where Roman’s father died in 1943 as a consequence of malnutrition. Following the liquidation of the ghetto, the remaining family members were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1944, where Roman was separated from his mother and sisters. Together with his brother Leon, Roman survived other concentration camps before being liberated at the age of sixteen by American soldiers during a death march from Flossenbürg to Dachau concentration camp.  
  
In 1946, Roman Kent emigrated together with his brother to the USA, where he then lived and became a successful businessman.  
  
In a tribute to Roman Kent, Christoph Heubner, the Executive Vice President of the International Auschwitz Committee, said in Berlin: “Auschwitz survivors throughout the world are now bidding farewell with profound gratitude and deep sadness to Roman Kent, who for many decades has been a resolute and powerfully eloquent representative of their memories and their lives. Roman Kent was quick to become involved, together with his fellow survivors from the Lodz ghetto and Auschwitz, Noach Flug and Marian Turski, as they stood up for the health and welfare of all survivors and for the compensation to which the prisoners of the German extermination machinery were entitled following their enslavement and forced labour. Roman Kent’s German counterparts respected his sensitive openness and his interest in a common future based on the facts of history. He spoke on behalf of the International Auschwitz Committee and as an Auschwitz survivor during the commemorative ceremony at the Auschwitz Memorial marking the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. Roman Kent’s call for an Eleventh Commandment warning against the lethal consequences of complacency ensured him a place in the annals of history. Throughout his life Roman Kent, as well as his wife Hannah, who was also an Auschwitz survivor, spoke out for remembrance, for tolerance and against anti-Semitism. Particularly over the past few months the weight on his shoulders was growing increasingly heavy. In face of current developments, the flaming images of the past began intruding relentlessly into his life. And right up to his final hours, he was alarmed and weighed down to see how the growth of anti-Semitic hatred and the glorification of Auschwitz are increasingly gaining ground. This too was why the future of the Auschwitz Memorial and the participation of the survivors in its work meant so much to him. The last letter that Roman Kent wrote was addressed to the Polish prime minister, and it warned against any kind of nationalization and monopolizing of the Memorial. We are deeply saddened and will greatly miss Roman Kent.“