

Our hearts have always been and always will be in Estonia. The 50-year fight for the freedom of Estonia succeeded. The contribution of diaspora Estonians was crucial.

## WHAT WE ARE DOING

We invite you to join in the multitude of events and actions planned around the world to commemorate the Mass Flight of 1944. Eighty years have passed since those fateful days of the Suurpõgenemine (Mass Flight, 1944). Today we ask for your help in establishing a permanent visible reminder of our refugee story and its significance in Estonian history, to be dedicated to those who had to flee their homeland, those who did not want to go, but could not stay.

The Mass Flight commemoration committee of the Estonian World Council has commissioned a memorial sculpture from artist Elo Liiv. Thanks to our partner, the City of Pärnu, the memorial, a special place of remembrance, will be located beside the Pärnu River. In 1944, roughly 10,000 Estonians made their escape through Pärnu.

Scheduled to be unveiled on **September 21, 2024**, this artful sculpture (below) will be the first such monument to the Mass Flight of 1944 in a major Estonian city and funded by all of us.



*...hetk, kus lähedased sidemed katkesid, õhku jäid südamevalu ja igatsus, süümepiinad, nähtamatud ühenduslõimed, mida hoiti salaja elus kogu okupatsiooni kestel. Elo Liiv, sculptor*



## PLEASE MAKE A GENEROUS DONATION

Join Estonians from across the United States, Australia, Canada, Germany, Sweden, and around the world in donating toward this important project. Together, our contributions help ensure that our shared history and the sacrifices by so many are rightfully remembered.

## WAYS TO DONATE

Donations accepted by check (preferred) and online ([www.estosite.org](http://www.estosite.org)). Checks payable: *Estonian American National Council* or *Estonian World Council*. Memo:

**EANC, Pärnu Project**  
c/o Leelo Linask  
16 Pepperidge Rd.  
Monroe, CT 06468 USA

**EWC, Pärnu Project**  
c/o Liivika Koren,  
311 56th St.  
Kenosha, WI 53140 USA



[Donate and read more](#)

# Mass Flight 1944

80 AASTAT SUURPÕGENEMISEST

*Minna ei taha,  
kuid jääda ei saa...*



Join us  
in creating a place  
of remembrance

# SUURPÕGENEMINE 1944

## IN ORDER TO SURVIVE

They were forced to flee.

They were bold, frightened but fearless as they escaped into the stormy Baltic Sea to face an uncertain future, leaving behind everything they knew and loved.

They faced repatriation to Soviet Estonia, where forced exile to the gulags and death loomed over them.

They mourned their families, their homes and their homeland.

They mourned the 6000 - 7000 countrymen who died in the cold, unforgiving sea. They faced years of exile, not knowing if they'd ever return...

## BECAUSE THEY SURVIVED

WE ARE HERE, fortunate to have lived a full life in freedom and to have followed our dreams.

We are over 200,000 people who form the Estonian diaspora, all over the world.

More than 80,000 Estonians were displaced in 1944 and then displaced again as they were reluctantly permitted to emigrate to USA, Canada, England, and Australia.

In a foreign land, they started their lives over again. Due to the language barrier, many could not work in their previous professions, but took whatever work they could find.

They gave us the opportunities we enjoy today, and established Estonian organizations, schools, choirs - keeping Estonian language, culture and traditions alive all over the world.

## BECAUSE OUR FAMILIES SACRIFICED

Estonian communities across the world come together today to honor their lives and perseverance with gratitude and respect. With your help, a touching memorial sculpture and place of remembrance (pictured below) will be a permanent reminder of their journey.

We continue to tell the story of this crucial part of Estonian history in Estonia, and across the Estonian diaspora. We will NEVER forget.



Photos from public sources and publications.

