

Institute of National Remembrance

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The Statement of the Institute of National Remembrance on media reports about Jakiw Palij – trained at the concentration camp in Trawniki

Jakiw Palij was a member of the criminal SS corps of the Third Reich.

The SS corps was part of the military forces of the Third Reich used, among others, to commit mass crimes against citizens of the Republic of Poland including Jews and Poles. It is common historical knowledge that no Polish SS unit ever existed.

There were, however, SS formations and other uniformed formations to which volunteers of Ukrainian nationality, including those born on the pre-war territory of Poland, were recruited. One of them was Jakiw Palij, a Ukrainian born in 1923 in the town of Piadyki near Kolomyia – an area partly populated by Ukrainians. During the Second World War, in German-occupied Poland, Palij made the decision to serve the German occupant in the criminal formations of the Third Reich. He thus became one of the tools and accomplices to the genocide carried out by the Third Reich on occupied Polish territories.

Jakiw Palij and others like him, serving the Third Reich and executing criminal orders, positioned themselves among the enemies of the Republic of Poland. From the very beginning of the Second World War, Poland fought against Germany hand in hand with the Allied Powers. Poland fought not only for its own freedom and independence but also the sovereignty of other nations. It suffered painful losses among the soldiers of the Polish Army and, above all, among the civilians terrorized and murdered by the occupiers. Both during the war and after its end, the legitimate authorities of the Republic of Poland demanded effective prosecution and punishment of war criminals, without lighter treatment for German officers such as Jakiw Palij.

The Institute of National Remembrance consistently supports actions aimed at prosecuting and effectively punishing all surviving executors of the criminal orders of the German occupant.

On 19 June 2018, as part of an investigation into Nazi crimes committed in 1940-1944 in Trawniki, the Branch Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation in Lublin applied to the United States for legal assistance in obtaining procedural and archival materials concerning Jakiw Palij- a former SS formation functionary.

In the course of the investigation, information was obtained that Jakiw Palij, residing in the US was deprived of American citizenship by a judgment of the United States District Court for the East District of New York. Evidence relating to his wartime past was collected during court proceedings.

According to the findings of the investigation of the Branch Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation in Lublin, Jakiw Palij served in the SS training camp in Trawniki, and later as a guard of the Wachmannschaften des SS im distrikt Lublin.

International legal aid in this matter has not yet been received by the Chief Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation.

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