

# Institute of National Remembrance

<https://ipn.gov.pl/en/news/1531,The-Institute-of-National-Remembrance-honors-the-victims-of-Martial-Law.html>

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## The Institute of National Remembrance honors the victims of Martial Law

The Institute of National Remembrance is encouraging everybody to place candles or lights on their windowsills on 13 December at 19:30 in order to commemorate the tragic events from 37 years ago. The “Freedom Light” can also be lit virtually at : [swiatlowolnosci.ipn.gov.pl](http://swiatlowolnosci.ipn.gov.pl) .The Institute has moreover prepared numerous commemorative and educational activities throughout the country.





This year's edition of the socio-educational campaign "Victims of Martial Law. Light the Freedom Light "will be launched, as in previous years, under the honorary patronage of the President of the Republic of Poland, Andrzej Duda. The campaign carried out by the Institute of National Remembrance aims to commemorate all those who lost their lives or otherwise suffered as a result of Martial Law introduced on 13 December 1981. In Warsaw, an illumination commemorating the victims of Martial Law will appear at the PGE National Stadium. IPN's branch offices throughout the country have prepared commemorative and educational activities.

The social campaign initiated by the Institute of National Remembrance a few years ago, "Victims of Martial Law. Light the Freedom Light "refers to the gesture of placing candles on the

windows, through which, in the early eighties, Poles, but also other inhabitants of the Free World, expressed opposition to the brutal policy of the authorities of the Polish People's Republic and expressed solidarity with thousands of internees and their families. The then US President Ronald Reagan called upon the Americans for a similar gesture of unity with the victims of Martial Law. - This year's Christmas brings little joy to the brave Polish nation. The Poles were betrayed by their own government. Those who rule them and their totalitarian allies are afraid of freedom, which Poles love so much. At the first signs of freedom, the rulers responded with brutal force, murders, mass arrests and the formation of internment camps - he said during his Christmas message. Candles lit in the windows of American houses were to symbolically call for justice and be an act of protest. - In the earlier years of the twentieth century, due to the evil, a threat appeared that the lights of the whole world would be put out. Let the flame of millions of candles in American homes be a testimony that the lights of freedom cannot be put out- said the President.

In the act of solidarity with the suffering compatriots, John Paul II decided that a symbolic light should appear in the window of the Apostolic Palace at the Vatican. During the Martial Law period, the Holy Father observed the situation in Poland closely, supporting the underground opposition and appealed for avoiding conflict and victims.

The Catholic Church in Poland has also joined the "Light the Freedom Light" campaign. A letter expressing support for the social action was sent to the President of the Institute of National Remembrance, Dr

Jarosław Szarek, the Chairman of the Polish Episcopate Conference  
Archbishop Metropolitan of Poznań, Stanisław Gądecki.

It is impossible to determine the exact number of victims of Martial Law. Those who died as a result of being shot or beaten by the militia and ZOMO were counted (although the calculations of individual researchers differ), we know how many people were interned. We will never be able to determine the number of those who were beaten, lost their jobs or were forced to emigrate. The balance of Martial Law should also include the broken biographies of many outstanding artists, intellectuals and social activists. All these victims are an irreparable loss to Polish culture, science and economy. The most innocent victims of Martial Law are often forgotten - the children of the repressed and interned, some of whom were taken away from their families and taken into childcare facilities.

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