

# Institute of National Remembrance

<https://ipn.gov.pl/en/digital-resources/infographics/7463,The-Katyn-Massacre.html>

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## The Katyn Massacre

# 2. THE KATYN MASSACRE

The Politburo, the highest policy-making authority of the USSR, decided to commit one of the most heinous crimes of WWII. In 2 months, the NKVD murdered about **22,000** Polish patriots – officers, policemen, scientists, clergy, lawyers, doctors and social activists. They were killed with a shot to the back of the head, and buried in mass graves on the territory of today's Russia, Ukraine and Belarus.

JOSEPH  
STALIN

## DECISION

### THE REASONS:

- AVENGE THE DEFEAT IN THE 1920 WAR AGAINST POLAND
- ELIMINATE THE POLISH ARMY LEADERSHIP
- LIQUIDATE POLISH INTELLECTUAL ELITES



LAVRENTIY  
BERIA

2 March 1940

In his memorandum to the Politburo, Lavrentiy Beria proposed that the Poles detained in the 3 camps be executed

5 March 1940

The Politburo ordered execution of the POWs from the camps of Kozelsk, Starobels and Ostashkov, as well as the Poles detained in NKVD prisons.

22 March 1940

Lavrentiy Beria ordered that the camps and prisons in so-called Western Ukraine and Belarus be "emptied"

## PROCEDURE TRANSPORTS FROM THE CAMPS TO NKVD OFFICES

<b>KOZELSK</b> 4,594 POWS		<b>GNEZDOVO NEAR SMOLENSK</b>		<b>KATYN FOREST</b> 4,423 VICTIMS, CA. 113 PER DAY		<b>BURIAL SITE:</b> KOZIE GÓRY FOREST	
<b>STAROBELSK</b> 3,893 POWS		<b>KHARKIV</b>		<b>NKVD OFFICE</b> 3,820 VICTIMS, CA. 103 PER DAY		<b>BURIAL SITE:</b> PIATYKHATKY FOREST	
<b>OSTASHKOV</b> 6,364 POWS		<b>KALININ (TODAY TWER)</b>		<b>NKVD OFFICE</b> 6,311 VICTIMS, CA. 150 PER DAY		<b>BURIAL SITE:</b> MEDNOYE	
<b>POWS IN THE UKRAINIAN LIST</b>			<b>KYIV, KHERSON, KHARKIV</b> 3,435 victims		<b>BURIAL SITE:</b> BYKOVNA NEAR KYIV		
<b>POWS IN THE BELARUSSIAN LIST</b>			<b>MINSK</b> 3,870 victims		<b>BURIAL SITE:</b> KUROPATY		

**SURVIVORS**  
3% OF THE POWS

## SECOND DEPORTATION 12-14 APRIL 1940

The Katyn Massacre was followed by the deportation of the victims' families into the USSR territory (a total of **60,000** deportees).

## MURDERED IN APRIL-MAY 1940

The total number of the victims amounted to almost **22,000**: **14,500** POWs from the NKVD special camps, and **7,305** POWs kept in the camps and prisons in occupied Western Ukraine and Belarus.

### NKVD POW camp

In Gryazovets 395 POWs, who were to be used for Soviet purposes (creating a Polish military formation within the Red Army) were transferred here from the 3 NKVD special camps



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