

Institute of National Remembrance

<https://ipn.gov.pl/en/news/2335,The-funeral-of-the-victims-of-German-terror-at-Fort-III-Pomiechowiek-5-September-.html>

20.03.2024, 11:24

05.09.2019

The funeral of the victims of German terror at Fort III - Pomiechówek, 5 September 2019























On 5 September 2019 the funeral of the victims of German terror found during the second stage of exhumation works at Fort Pomiechówek took place in the left courtyard of the Fort, next to the graves dating back to last year's exhumations. The President of the Institute of National Remembrance, Dr Jarosław Szarek, Deputy President Prof. Krzysztof Szwagrzyk and Deputy Director of the IPN Office for Commemorating the Struggle and Martyrdom, Renata Soszyńska attended the ceremony.

The ceremony in Pomiechówek was attended by the Polish Minister of National Defense Mariusz Błaszczak, who in his speech emphasized that not only the soldiers of the Polish Underground State, but also children and members of the local community were among the victims.

- It is our obligation to preserve the memory of and to pay our last

respects to those who were murdered - said Minister Mariusz Błaszczak. - *I would like to thank everyone who made the funerals here, today possible*, said the head of the Ministry of National Defense.

The President of the IPN, Dr Jarosław Szarek, emphasized the scale of German crimes in Fort III in Pomiechówek. - "We are standing on the site where 15,000 people - our ancestors - were murdered. If we were to bury them all, 450 such rows would have to be erected here".

The delegations paid tribute to those murdered in Fort III in Pomiechówek, laying wreaths on the graves of victims of German crimes.

During the funeral ceremonies, the IPN's Office of Search and Identification carried out activities aimed at obtaining DNA samples from the families of those murdered in Pomiechówek.

The ceremony was organized by the IPN Office for Commemorating the Struggle and Martyrdom and the Head of the Pomiechówek District, Dariusz Tomasz Bielecki.

On 17 June, the 2nd stage of exhumation works began at Fort III in Pomiechówek - it covered the area of the small courtyard and a fragment of the large right courtyard. During the works, which lasted over a month, the remains of 46 people including three small children were revealed. The archaeological works commissioned by the Institute of National Remembrance were conducted by the Łódź Research Foundation.

The remains of people murdered by the Germans in the years 1941–1944 in the prison in Pomiechówek were found along with German shells and coins from the Second World War. The work also enabled experts to verify incorrect information about the Fort. The elevated, wooded left courtyard was until now widely regarded as the location of a mass grave of the victims and thus the site on which the local inhabitants arranged a makeshift memorial. Meanwhile, archaeological research conducted in 2018 revealed the area is not a burial site and only the foundations of an outbuilding dating back to the First World War are located there. Further stages of work are planned for 2020-2021.

Fort III in Pomiechówek is a place where thousands of Poles and Jews from northern Mazovia were murdered. During World War II the Fort served, among others, as a German resettlement camp, a ghetto and a prison. Large numbers of people, often representatives of town and village elites, were brought to Pomiechówek from northern Mazovia. According to surveys conducted in 1945, the number of prisoners was estimated at around 50,000, and those murdered at around 15,000. Similar data can be found in the documents of the Polish Red Cross.

The activities of the Institute of National Remembrance are aimed at ensuring the proper burial and commemoration of the victims of German crimes.

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