

# Institute of National Remembrance

<https://ipn.gov.pl/en/news/2428,Warsaw-Dialogue-for-Democracy-3-October-2019.html>

23.04.2024, 22:29

01.10.2019

## Warsaw Dialogue for Democracy – 3 October 2019

It is for the eighth time that representatives of the Institute of National Remembrance took part in the Warsaw Dialogue for Democracy.









The aim of this year's edition "Freedom of religion or belief as a pillar of democracy", which took place in Warsaw on 3 October, is to highlight the links between the freedom of religion and belief and democratization processes in the world.

During the opening ceremony, Minister of Foreign Affairs Jacek Czaputowicz, Dr. Souraya Bechealany, Secretary General of the Middle East Council of Churches, Prof. Monica Lugato from LUMSA University and Jan Figel, Special Envoy for the promotion of Freedom of Religion or Belief outside the European Union, delivered speeches. Jan Figel mentioned, among others, the role of religion in the spiritual revival of the former Eastern Bloc countries after the transformation of 1989. A video material with a speech by Ahmed Shaheed, a special UN envoy for freedom of religion or belief, was also presented. The joint view was expressed that freedom of religion is the foundation of democracy, inseparably connected with such civil liberties as freedom of speech, freedom of conscience and individual dignity.

This year, prof. Krzysztof Sychowicz (Branch of the Institute of National Remembrance in Bialystok) presented a paper, constituting an introduction to the discussion panel entitled "Freedom of religion and belief and the state". The theme of his speech was religious persecution in totalitarian regimes. Referring to communism and Nazism, coexisting for some time in Europe, Prof. Sychowicz pointed out that when we analyse the attitude of these two totalitarian systems towards Churches and religions, their common desire to limit the presence of religion in public life and the social sphere, and the subordination of their structures to the state, become apparent. In the event of any form of resistance, violence aimed at representatives of a

given denomination followed. In conclusion - referring, inter alia, to the times of People's Republic Poland - he stated that the Church was the only and last place where a person could feel really free.

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The first edition of the event was organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland together with the Institute of National Remembrance on 14-15 December 2012 in Warsaw. It is an initiative addressed to all persons, institutions and organizations working for the promotion of democracy, the rule of law and human rights. The aim of the conference is to bring together representatives of civil society and the world of science and politics to exchange best practices and expertise in the field of the democratization agenda. In the years 2012-2017, as part of the Dialogue, the IPN organized its own discussion panel on broadly understood transitional justice.

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