

# Institute of National Remembrance

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## The 75th anniversary of the Augustów Roundup – Giby, 19 July 2020



In July 1945, the Red Army units, assisted by Polish Army forces and officers of the Security Office and its agents, conducted a major

pacification operation in the area of the Augustów Forest, referred to as the Augustów Roundup. On the Soviet side, the operation involved the units of the 50<sup>th</sup> Army of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Belarusian Front, the NKVD Internal Troops and officers of the military counterintelligence service SMERSH. Polish officers of the Office of Public Security, the Citizens' Militia and local informers supported the Soviets as guides and interpreters; they also assisted during interrogations.

The Soviet forces combed the forests and villages to arrest people suspected of contacts with the Polish national resistance movement. The exact dates of the operation proved impossible to establish: it is most frequently placed between 12 and 28 July. In total, several thousand people were detained in the course of the operation; some of them were arrested and tortured during investigation. About six hundred have never been heard of again. Most likely, all of them lost their lives as a result of one Soviet-planned action and should be treated as victims of the Augustów Roundup.

Poland has long made efforts to discover the fate of those who went missing in the operation. They might have been executed and buried near the border (on the Belarusian side) or transported further east. What is certain is that they were murdered with the approval of top Soviet political authorities.

On the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Augustów Roundup, the Białystok Branch of the Institute of National Remembrance has prepared a special publication entitled "Obława Augustowska lipiec

1945” [The Augustów Roundup of July 1945] and, in cooperation with the Regional Directorate of State Forests in Białystok, commemorative postage stamps and postcards informing and reminding about this terrible crime. The materials will be handed out to the participants of the ceremony.

- *Remembrance of our heroes is not only our duty but also an expression of our national identity* - wrote Piotr Kardela Ph.D., the Director of the IPN's Branch Office in Białystok in the introduction to the anniversary publication.

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