

Institute of National Remembrance

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The ceremony of handing out identification notes to family members of 30 victims of totalitarian regimes - Warsaw, 22 June 2022























The Presidential Palace in Warsaw saw today a ceremony in which relatives of 30 people murdered by totalitarian regimes – their remains found and identified by the IPN Office of Search and Identification – received notes confirming that identity, and the victims’ names and biographies were released.

Apart from the relatives of the identified people, the event was attended by the IPN President Karol Nawrocki, as well as Deputy Presidents Karol Polejowski, Mateusz Szpytma and Krzysztof Szwagrzyk. It is Mr. Szwagrzyk’s team that located and identified the victims.

The President of the Institute, Karol Nawrocki said at the ceremony:

"Our heroes were either born or grew up in free and independent Poland, the Second Polish Republic, which they loved, which they served, which they were prepared to fight and die for – and today, symbolically, they are returning to a free and independent Poland."

and added,

"Most of them were underground resistance members or soldiers . . . ready for bellum iustum, just war, in which they acted on the will of the Polish Nation, in which they represented the legitimate government, both under German occupation and after 1945."

Deputy President Krzysztof Szwagrzyk, addressing the relatives of the identified people, said,

"The staff of the Office of Search and Identification were honored to carry out the task of finding the remains of our heroes. Working to make that happen . . . we experienced something that made your dear ones become our dear ones too."

Events like today's are the culmination of years of the Office of Search and Identification efforts. The work always begins in the archives, where experts try to locate information on a victim's fate and burial. Thorough research not only points to the probable grave location, but also determines physical characteristics (such as height, build or suffered injuries), the findings reinforced by witness testimonies.

The core of the process, involving archaeology and anthropology experts, is the excavation. It is performed in all kinds of terrain in Poland and abroad: in fields and forests, gardens, urban areas and cemeteries. Once the remains are uncovered, they undergo initial anthropological examination on-site, followed by a thorough one in the lab, and a sample of bone matter is taken to be tested against genetic material provided by victims' relatives.

A genetic match means that a person's identity has been confirmed. For a few years, the IPN has been employing CODIS, a system that the Federal Bureau of Investigation developed to streamline the searching

of the genetic material base. It was this efficient tool that allowed the Office to match the names to people.

So far, the Office staff have identified 220 victims of totalitarian regimes.

The 30 victims of totalitarian regimes identified by the IPN Office of Search and Identification

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