

# Institute of National Remembrance

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## The IPN's "Custodian of National Memory" Prize was awarded on 18 June 2025 at the Royal Castle in Warsaw

The "Custodian of National Memory" Prize was established in July 2002 by the first President of the Institute of National Remembrance, Prof. Leon Kieres. The award was initiated by Prof. Janusz Kurtyka, the then director of the IPN's Cracow branch. The idea behind the award is to promote respect for the nation's past and the values thanks to which Poland was reborn after years of subjugation. The prize is honorary, and its winners receive the title of Custodian of National Memory. The prize is awarded annually by a Jury chaired by the President of the IPN and composed of previous winners of the prize. It can be awarded to institutions, social organizations and individuals for particularly active participation in commemorating the history of the Polish nation in the years 1939–1989, as well as for public activities that coincide with the statutory objectives of the IPN.

At the event in Warsaw Royal Castle, the Institute of National Remembrance was represented by Deputy Presidents Prof. Karol Polejowski, Mateusz Szpytma, Ph.D. and Prof. Krzysztof Szwagrzyk.

Having presented the winners with their awards, Prof. Polejowski said,

*We are proud of our ancestors, proud of the Polish state they managed to build and pass on to next generations. The Custodians of National Memory do the same thing: not only do they preserve the past, but lay foundations for its survival in the future.*

Following people and organization were awarded the "Custodian of National Memory" Prize this year:

Gabriel Garçon – a math professor at the Technology School in Lille. He teaches Slavic studies at the local university. Born in France to Polish parents, he's been researching the history of Polish emigré circles in La Republique, working in diaspora organizations and publishing extensively. Professor Garçon donated his priceless archives, documenting the history of Poles in France, to the IPN Archive.

Andrzej Władysław Kaczorowski – a dissident under the communist regime in Poland and member of the Farmers' "Solidarity." Under illegally-introduced martial law. He participated in countryside strikes in southern Poland and reported them to the rest of the country. He wrote for underground press, and since the regime collapse, has

authored hundreds of texts telling the history of the peasant dissident movement.

The 1942-1948 Poles in India Circle, based in London, preserves the memory of Polish subjects, deported from the USSR-annexed Polish lands in 1939, and rescued from the Soviet exile by General Władysław Anders in 1942. The Circle not only investigates and documents the history of Poles who found themselves in India, their community life and relationships with the local people, but also engages in charity projects to repay the warm Indian welcome from eighty years ago.

A posthumous title went to Adam Chętnik, who protected the unique culture and traditions of the Kurpie, Warmia and Mazury regions back when Poland was under foreign rule in early 20th century. In free Poland, he set up an open-air museum in Nowogród, saw it destroyed by the Germans, but rebuilt the place after the Second World War and opened another one in Łomża. Until his death in 1967. He taught the public about the precious cultural legacy he had helped to save.

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