

# Institute of National Remembrance

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## A funeral ceremony for the victims of Volhynia genocide in Ostrówki, Ukraine

























Ś.P.  
Nieznana Ofiara Zbrodni Wołyńskiej

Ostrówki (cmentarz)

zamordowana 30 sierpnia 1943 r.

Odnaleziona podczas prac ekshumacyjnych  
Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej w 2026 r.

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On 30 August 2026, on the 83rd anniversary of the massacre of the Polish inhabitants of Ostrówki and Wola Ostrowiecka, a funeral ceremony was held at the cemetery in Ostrówki, Ukraine, for 55 victims of the Volhynia genocide. Among them were 26 children.

The remains were recovered during search and exhumation work conducted between 13 July and 7 August 2026 by an interdisciplinary team involving specialists from the Institute of National Remembrance. The burial sites had been located during searches carried out in April.

The remains of 55 victims were recovered from three locations: a mass grave at the former farmstead of Aleksander Strażyc in Wola Ostrowiecka, containing 48 people, including 24 children; a mass grave near the former school in Ostrówki, containing six people; and a single grave in a forest, where the remains of a woman were found.



More than 300 personal belongings, including religious medals, crosses and rosaries, were also recovered. Material was secured for DNA testing.

On 30 August 1943, Ostrówki and Wola Ostrowiecka were attacked by units of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), supported by Ukrainian inhabitants of neighbouring villages. Within a matter of hours, approximately 1,050 Polish residents of the two villages were murdered, including hundreds of women and children. The villages were subsequently looted and destroyed.

The funeral ceremony began with Holy Mass celebrated for the victims and presided over by Bishop Vitaliy Skomarovskyi of Lutsk.

Following the Mass, Jakub Banaszek, Adviser to the President of the Republic of Poland and Mayor of Chełm, read a letter addressed to those gathered by President Karol Nawrocki:

*We will never forget those who died in agony simply because they were Polish. We will not cease our efforts until all our compatriots murdered by members of the OUN-UPA are given a proper burial and commemoration.*

The Deputy President of the IPN Karol Polejowski also addressed the participants, including representatives of the Polish and Ukrainian



authorities.

*The presence of representatives of the Ukrainian authorities gives me hope for the future, because I too believe that we are witnessing a slow, but nevertheless real, process of granting permits for searches and exhumations.*

He emphasised that the IPN has been carrying out this mission for decades and will continue searching for the victims:

*About 300 residents of Ostrówki and Wola Ostrowiecka are still waiting to be found and given a dignified burial. This is another funeral, and we will return here.*

Speaking alongside the families who for decades preserved the memory of those murdered and of their lost homeland Karol Polejowski stressed that Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation must rest on a firm foundation:



*As Poles, we are a nation capable of forgiveness and reconciliation. But this reconciliation must be based on very simple principles: truth, truth and truth once again!*

Representatives of the Polish Parliament, Polish state and local authorities, the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Kyiv, Ukrainian state and local authorities, Catholic and Orthodox clergy, the military and organisations dedicated to commemorating the victims of the Volhynia genocide attended the ceremony alongside the victims' families and descendants of survivors.

After the Mass, the remains were laid to rest in a grave near the site of the ceremony. Flowers were placed at the cross commemorating the Polish victims.

The search is not over. Around 300 inhabitants of Ostrówki and Wola Ostrowiecka are still waiting to be found.

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