Institute of National Remembrance

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“Dreams rising from the graves”: Burial ceremony for 49 victims of communist oppression

Polish President Karol Nawrocki was joined by the IPN’s Deputy Presidents, Dr Karol Polejowski, Dr Mateusz Szpytma and Dr Krzysztof Szwagrzyk at a ceremonial burial of the remains of 49 victims of communist oppression which took place at the Osobowice Cemetery in Wrocław on Wednesday 21 October.






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The funeral ceremony for the victims – soldiers and underground independence activists – began with a Mass at the cemetery, commemorating the victims of the communist regime buried there. Prayers were led by Military Ordinary, Bishop Wiesław Lechowicz.

Speaking at the ceremony, President Nawrocki said:

> The communist system is not content merely with the deaths of its victims; it does everything in its power to destroy their graves. It does everything in its power to destroy the truth about those it murders. To erase the memory of them.

Referring to the words of Col. Łukasz Ciepliński, last president of the anti-communist Freedom and Independence Association (WiN) who was tortured and shot by communist secret police in 1951, Poland's president underlined that "unfulfilled dreams will rise from the graves" thanks to families who never forget, as well as to members of the anti-communist opposition from Wrocław in the 1980s who stood up for their memory. Nawrocki also thanked the work of the IPN.

President Karol Nawrocki underlined:

> I believe that each of these 49 victims felt the same as Łukasz Ciepliński, codename "Pług": this death will not be in vain. We are ready to fight, because we believe that Poland will be free, and that unfulfilled dreams will rise from the graves. (...) That is why I stand here with pride, and with a deep sense of duty as President of Poland, to say that today we are laying Polish heroes to rest. We remember those who committed these murders and who are being held to account for them, but above all we remember those who gave their lives for our beloved homeland.

Speaking on behalf of the families, Magdalena Ziółkowska, great-

granddaughter of Lt. Col. Ludwik Marszałek codename “Zbroja”, said that:

> This is not merely the story of a man sentenced to death. It is the story of children deprived of their father, of a family torn apart, and of a longing that could find no solace. Behind every historical date and every name lies someone's life, someone’s love.

Plots 81A and 120 at the Osobowice Cemetery are former prison burial sections where, between 1948 and 1956, the remains of individuals – including members of the anti-communist independence underground – were secretly interred.

In 2023, the IPN, in coordination with the Municipality of Wrocław and the Lower Silesian Voivodeship Office, initiated efforts to reorganise both plots and establish a dedicated war-grave section for the “Steadfast Soldiers” (anti-communist resistance fighters) and others who fought for Poland’s independence. This site is intended to serve as a tribute to all those who gave their lives for the country’s freedom.

Between 2024 and 2026, the remains were exhumed from prison plots 81A and 120, located in front of the monument to the Victims of Communist Terror 1945–1956. This work represented a significant step toward restoring the proper character of the site and ensuring a

dignified final resting place for the victims of communist repression.

View the transmission of the funeral ceremony below [in Polish]:



President Karol Nawrocki speaks at the burial ceremony for 49 victims of communist oppression in Wrocław, 21 October 2026. Photo: IPN/Sławek

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Burial ceremony for 49 victims of communist oppression in Wrocław, 21 October 2026. Photo: IPN/Sławek Kasper



Burial ceremony for 49 victims of communist oppression in Wrocław, 21 October 2026. Photo: IPN/Sławek Kasper



Family representative Magdalena Ziółkowska - great-granddaughter of Lt. Col. Ludwik Marszałek codename “Zbroja” - speaks at the burial ceremony for 49 victims of communist oppression in Wrocław, 21 October 2026. Photo: IPN/Sławek Kasper



Burial ceremony for 49 victims of communist oppression in Wrocław, 21 October 2026. Photo: IPN/Sławek Kasper



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Burial ceremony for 49 victims of

communist oppression in Wrocław, 21 October 2026. Photo: IPN/Sławek Kasper



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Burial ceremony for 49 victims of communist oppression in

Wrocław, 21

October 2026.

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