

# Institute of National Remembrance

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## Commemorations of the National Remembrance Day for Victims of the German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camps – Warsaw, 14 June 2023

The commemorations took place at noon in front of the Monument Tree of Pawiak at the Pawiak Prison Museum. The Institute of National Remembrance was represented by the IPN Deputy President Prof. Karol Polejowski. Among the participants were the Head of the Office for War Veterans and Victims of Repression Jan Jozef Kasprzyk, Israeli Ambassador to Poland Yacov Livne, Ph.D., and the President of the Polish Association of Former Political Prisoners of Nazi Prisons and Concentration Camps Stanisław Zalewski.







































The ceremony, assisted by the military officers, began with the singing



of the Polish national anthem. After the official speeches, the memory of the victims was commemorated with a joint ecumenical prayer, the lighting of candles under the plaques and the laying of flowers at the Monument Tree of Pawiak.

The second part of the celebration took place at the Powązki Military Cemetery, where flowers were laid at the Monument-Mausoleum of the Victims of Concentration Camps.

### **The German death factory**

728 Poles including members of the underground resistance movement and those arrested in round-ups were sent to the KL Auschwitz on 14 June 1940. By the resolution of the Polish Sejm, we celebrate 14 June as the National Remembrance Day for Victims of the German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camps.

The date of 14 June 1940 is considered to mark the beginning of the operation of the German extermination camp in Auschwitz. The first transport of prisoners (they were given camp numbers from 31 to 758), consisted of a large group of people who had attempted to reach France where the Polish Armed Forces were formed. Some prisoners were arrested during Operation AB, i.e. the Extraordinary Operation of Pacification carried out by the Germans in the General Government in 1940. The first prisoners also included those detained during round-ups, activists of political, underground and social organizations, government officials, scouts, high school graduates and other representatives of the Polish intelligentsia. On 14 June 1940, also a



small group of Polish Jews was brought to Auschwitz.

During an appeal from the Deputy Commander of the camp, SS Hauptsturmführer Karl Fritzsche camp addressed the prisoners: *You have not come to a sanatorium, but rather to a German concentration camp, from which the only way out is through the chimney. If anybody doesn't like it, you can go throw yourself on the barbed wire right now. If there are any Jews in this transport, they have the right to live not longer than two weeks, priests a month, and the rest - three months.*

239 people from the first transport survived the hell of Auschwitz. Some were released after several months, others had been there for over four years.

[Commemorations in the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum](#)

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