

Institute of National Remembrance

<https://ipn.gov.pl/en/news/810,Letter-of-the-President-of-IPN-to-the-Norwegian-Press-Complaints-Commission.html>

28.04.2024, 18:23

01.12.2015

Letter of the President of IPN to the Norwegian Press Complaints Commission





„It was with true concern that I received the information that the Norwegian Press Complaints Commission had approved the term „Polish concentration camps" as acceptable in media coverage and as fully reflecting the historical truth. I deeply disagree with this and insist on re-considering your position” - wrote the President of the Institute of National Remembrance Dr. Łukasz Kamiński in a letter to members of the Norwegian Press Complaints Commission.

On 15 August 2015 the term „Polish concentration camp" was used in an article in the Norwegian newspaper *Avisa Sor-Trondelag*. A complaint to the Norwegian Press Complaints Commission was brought by Henryk Malinowski, editor of the Polish community website Scanpress.net. The Commission stated, however, that the phrase „Polish concentration camp" indicates only that it was located on Polish territory, and thus did not breach the principles of journalism.

„In the German-occupied Poland there did not exist and could not exist „Polish" death or concentration camps. These camps were created by the German occupiers in order to fulfil their criminal policy of annihilation or enslavement of people of different nationalities - including Poles” - wrote President of the IPN. In his view, the phrase „Polish concentration camps”, appearing

from time to time in the media, is one of the most blatant examples of distorting the truth about the past. The concept suggests that it was the Poles who were the creators and managers of the camps.

If similar statements appear in the media abroad, Polish diplomatic missions will take appropriate action. In order to support the work of Polish diplomatic corps, in August 2012 IPN created www.truthaboutcamps.eu website, which contains basic information about the extermination and concentration camps created by Nazi Germany in the occupied Poland during World War II. The website explains the liability issues for the German camps based on historical facts. Currently it is available in the following languages: Polish, English, German and Bulgarian. Other language versions are being prepared.

Letter of the President of IPN to the Norwegian Press Complaints Commission:

„It was with true concern that I received the information that the Norwegian Press Complaints Commission had approved the term „Polish concentration camps" as acceptable in media coverage and as fully reflecting the historical truth. I deeply disagree with this and insist on re-considering your position.

The emerging from time to time in the media term „Polish concentration camps" is one of the most blatant examples of distorting the truth about the past. This concept suggests that the creators and

administrators of these camps were Poles. It is hardly surprising that it produces a sharp opposition in Poland, as a country that has suffered a lot during World War II. After all, these camps were created at the time when Poland was occupied by the Germans. They were the creators of these camps. They administered them. They are responsible for the death and suffering of millions of people who were imprisoned in the camps. The details of these issues can be found on www.truthaboutcamps.eu.

The term „Polish concentration camps" is not only contrary to historical truth, but it also hurts the feelings of victims of World War II. All those Polish citizens who have been locked up in them and miraculously survived are unable to understand why history of their lives has been falsified in that way. In the name of respect for them, we should precisely define historical truth to avoid bringing them additional pain.

This truth, evident in Poland, should be recognized around the world. In the German-occupied Poland there did not exist and could not exist „Polish" death or concentration camps. These camps were created by the German occupiers in order to fulfil their criminal policy of annihilation or enslavement of people of different nationalities - including Poles. The same position is shared by a growing circle of journalists. In November 2010 editors of „Wall Street Journal" banned their reporters from using the phrase „Polish camps". Other newsrooms that banned this insulting term are the following.: „San Francisco Chronicle" (February 2011), „New York Times" (March 2011), the portal „Yahoo" (September 2011), „the Associated Press" (2012).

I strongly believe that the Norwegian media will also follow this path”.

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