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Poland honours anti-communist resistance fighters

The Cursed Soldiers (members of the anti-communist resistance movement after WW2) were on the side of free Poland and never surrendered, President Andrzej Duda said on Tuesday.

The ceremonies of Cursed Soldiers' Remembrance Day, which commemorates members of resistance movement fighting against the new Russia-backed communist authorities of Poland after the end of WW2, took place in Warsaw on Tuesday.



At the Presidential Palace President Andrzej Duda awarded three appointments to the rank of general, nine posthumous officer appointments and more than 30 state distinctions.

The Polish president called March 1 - Cursed Soldiers' Remembrance Day - "a very important commemoration" and expressed pride in the possibility of recounting the story and honouring the memory of true Polish heroes.

He added that establishing Cursed Soldiers' Remembrance Day had been an initiative of the late president Lech Kaczynski.

Duda pointed to the ties between today's Polish Army and the anti-communist underground army. "Those indomitable soldiers ... were soldiers of the Polish state. May the fact that today the Polish president is handing appointments to the rank of general to Polish Army soldiers in active service be proof that this is a single Polish army: the army that fought for Poland's true freedom and independence, and the army of today", he said.

"They stood on the side of free Poland to the end, and never surrendered", the president said about the Cursed Soldiers. "What awaited them in those days was death, or at best torture, prison, suffering and pain", he added.

The Cursed Soldiers are an "open book" of Poland's future, according to Duda. The soldiers of the anti-communist resistance are role models for young people of today, showing them how not to betray ideals, the president also said.

Referring to ongoing work to build cultural institutions showing Poland's real history, Duda said that he hoped the Cursed Soldiers would become a "great and wonderful foundation of a strong, sovereign, independent Poland".

On Tuesday morning Prime Minister Beata Szydlo met with four officers who had been among the Cursed Soldiers and announced that she had decided they would receive special pensions.

"I know this is very little, that they should be rewarded in a truly great way, but at least symbolically the Polish government wants to underline our great respect and our gratitude", the Polish prime minister said.

She added that the aim of her government was for young generations to learn the values that the Cursed Soldiers had carried with them throughout their lives.

"They proved and showed us all that the words 'God, Honour and Homeland' in practice means lasting to the very end, behaving decently in the toughest situations", Szydło said.

"We are restoring Polish national tradition, the memory of how Poland really regained its independence and thanks to whom it regained its independence", Defence Minister Antoni Macierewicz remarked at a commemorative roll call for the Cursed Soldiers at the Polish Army Museum in Warsaw.

On March 1, 1951, after a show trial, seven leading members of the anti-communist resistance were executed in a Public Security Ministry prison in Warsaw. March 1 has been observed as Cursed Soldiers' Remembrance Day since 2011.

Source: PAP

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