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05.08.2025, 01:01

27.10.2018

President Duda grants Polish citizenship to war veteran

President Andrzej Duda presented the Act of Citizenship to 90-year-old Franciszek Jakowczyk, a soldier of the Home Army resistance force in German-occupied Poland, who spent 20 years in Soviet gulags. The combatant returned to Poland in February 2018.

The president emphasised during the ceremony that took place on Saturday in Wrocław, southwestern Poland, that the act of granting Polish citizenship is "not giving, but confirming what has always been true."



"It is a confirmation of what you have always been convinced of, and what you always carried in your heart from home, from Poland in which you were born".

Andrzej Duda pointed out that Jakowczyk had spent the best years of his youth in captivity, in Soviet gulags, because of his steadfastness.

"You have turned 90 this year. Your exile ends today with this symbolic gesture. It makes me very happy," President Duda said.



Jakowczyk is a Pole born in 1928 in the Kresy Wschodnie (or Eastern Borderlands, Poland's pre-WWII eastern territories), which after World War II became part of Belarus. He was a soldier of the Home Army (which after the war continued fighting against Poland's Soviet-imposed communist regime).



In 1948, Jakowczyk was sentenced to 25 years in labour camps for armed struggle. He regained freedom only in 1969. He tried to return to Poland as part of the repatriation, but was told that: "He is not subject to repatriation because of a grave crime against the people of the USSR." In February 2018, Franciszek Jakowczyk came to Wrocław to receive medical treatment in Poland.

Source: PAP

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