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## President attends January Uprising burials in Lithuania

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**President Andrzej Duda on Friday in the Lithuanian capital Vilnius attended the ceremonial burial of the remains of participants in Poland's 1863 January Uprising against the Russian Empire.**



The ceremony was preceded by a holy mass in Vilnius Cathedral celebrated by Lithuanian, Polish and Belarusian bishops, which concluded with addresses by the Polish and Lithuanian presidents. After the mass, a funeral procession carried the January insurgents' remains to the city's Rasos Cemetery, where the burial took place.

The burial ceremony followed the discovery three years ago of the remains of twenty January Uprising participants, including its commanders Wincenty Konstanty Kalinowski and Zygmunt Sierakowski, during archeological diggings in Vilnius.

In his address after the mass, Duda said the ceremony commemorated heroes common to Poles, Lithuanians, Belarusians, Latvians and Ukrainians, and stressed that the mentioned peoples shared common historical experiences and values, especially the love of freedom. In this context he stressed that the unity of the Central-East European nations was a necessary mainstay of their strength and independence.



"The unity of the Central-European nations is a vital (...) guarantee of our countries' freedom, sovereignty, strength and independence. And I am deeply and strongly convinced that we will continue to act in this very spirit, building a prosperous Central Europe of many nations," Duda said.

Recalling the January Uprising, Andrzej Duda recalled that it was directed against Tsarist Russia, which had destroyed the onetime Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and enslaved its peoples, and that the leading idea guiding the insurgents was the desire for freedom.

"In the name of these values they undertook an unequal battle for freedom, dignity and independence. Today we (...) stand here to pay tribute to our antecedents' heroism and sacrifice. But we also stand here (...) to manifest that we, like they 156 years ago, share a common remembrance and a common fate, common values and desires," the president said.

Before the burial ceremony the Polish delegation, which included parliamentarians, laid red and white flowers at a mausoleum dedicated to Poland's inter-war leader Jozef Pilsudski, remembered as the architect of Poland's 1918 re-emergence as a state.



In 1863-1864 Russian troops executed 21 leaders and participants of the 1863 January Uprising against the Russian Empire, which had partitioned Poland together with Prussia and Austria at the end of the 18th century and kept it off the European map for 123 years. The victims' bodies were buried in secret. In 2017 the burial sites of twenty of the insurgents were discovered during archaeological work on Vilnius' Castle Hill.

The January Uprising broke out on January 22, 1863, and continued until 1864.

*Source: PAP*

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