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Poland recognizes WWII mass killings by Ukrainian nationalists as genocide

March marking the 72nd anniversary of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army in Lviv. © Chekachkov Igor © Sputnik

The lower house of Polish parliament, the Sejm, has passed a resolution which labels as genocide crimes committed by Ukrainian nationalists against the Poles in during World War II. The decision was met with regret in Ukraine.

The document, adopted by the lower house of parliament on Friday, declared July 11 *"the Day of commemoration of the Poles who fell victim to the genocide committed by OUN-UPA (Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists – Ukrainian Insurgent A........................ to the victims of the genocide .... by Ukrainian*

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.......e calls on WHO to stop cooperating with

nationalists against citizens of the Second Polish
Republic in 1943-1945."

The move follows a resolution adopted by the upper
house, the Senate, on July 8, meaning that the crimes of
Ukrainian nationalists in Volhynia (also called Volyn) – an
area of southeast Poland that was occupied by Nazi
German troops during the war – are officially viewed as
genocide by the Polish state.

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according to TASS.

The *"genocide"*
committed during this
period *"resulted in the
massacres of more
than 100,000 citizens
of the Second Polish
Republic, mostly
peasants. Their exact
number is still
unknown, and many
of them have not been
buried with dignity to
date,"* the Sejm's
resolution said,

*"The memory of the victims of the crimes committed by
Ukrainian nationalists in the 1940s has not been duly
cherished until now, and mass murders were not called
genocide in accordance with historical truth,"* the Polish
MPs stressed.

However the Sejm acknowledged that Poles were also
responsible for a crackdown on the Ukrainian population
during World War II.

*"While recalling the atrocities of Ukrainian nationalists,
one cannot turn a blind eye to reprisal actions in
Ukrainian villages that too claimed the lives of civilians,"*
the document stressed.

Ukrainian President P̶̶̶̶̶̶̶ in a
Facebook post that he was sickened by the Polish

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Sejm's resolution.

"I feel regret about the decision of the Polish Sejm. I know that many will want to use it for political speculation," Poroshenko wrote, adding that Ukraine and Poland should find mutual forgiveness.

The Ukrainian parliament's foreign affairs committee has slammed the declaration of the National Remembrance Day in Poland for hampering the rapprochement over the two actions.

"The adoption by the Polish Sejm and Senate of anti-Ukrainian resolutions negates all the constructive political and diplomatic developments and the efforts of the two countries and peoples aimed at mutual forgiveness and reconciliation, as well as the memory of the innocent Ukrainian and Polish victims," the committee said in a statement.

The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) – and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) it later created – collaborated with the Nazis during WWII against the Soviet forces in an attempt to create a Ukrainian state independent from the USSR.

In 1943, Ukrainian nationalists launched a campaign to annihilate the Polish population in the Volhynia Region. On July 11 of that year, OUN-UPA units attacked nearly 100 Polish-populated towns and villages, killing an estimated 100,000 people, including women, children and the elderly.

Despite international condemnation, OUN-UPA members are regarded as heroes and freedom fighters by the current government in

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Polish cosmonaut, Miroslaw Hermaszewski, who was lucky to survive an UPA-OUN attack as a baby, has welcomed the parliamentary resolution.

"I'm very emotional today. I thank them [the MPs] for making such an important decision. It's was a genocide – there's no other word for it," Hermaszewski told RT.

The cosmonaut, who spent over a week in space back in 1978, expressed hope that the decision wouldn't affect relations between Poland and Ukraine, which *"we value very highly."*

"We're not talking about Ukrainians. We're talking about Ukrainian nationalists, who fly the UPA-OUN banners. It's the main problem. One cannot turn criminals into heroes."

The UPA-OUN fighters attacked the village of Lipniki in Volhynia on the night of 26–27 March 1943, killing 182 people, including 18 of the cosmonaut's relatives.

The future cosmonaut was lost by his mother, who was injured while escaping a nationalist. The baby spent hours in the snow before being found by his dad and taken to safety.

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