

# European Court Says It Can't Rule on Katyn

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The Strasbourg court, pictured above during a hearing, ruled on a case involving the Katyn massacre of Polish troops during World War II.

PARIS — The European Court of Human Rights said Monday that it cannot rule on whether or not Russia properly investigated a World War II massacre of thousands of Polish officers at Katyn because it has not received vital documents from Moscow to properly judge the case.

The court found Russia in violation of its commitments to the European Convention on Human Rights.

Fifteen Poles have complained that Russia failed to hold a proper investigation into the 1940 killing by the Soviet secret police of some 22,000 Polish officers and intellectuals in the Katyn forest and other places.

Russia discontinued its investigation in 2004. It refused to make its reasoning available to the relatives or to the European court.

In Moscow, Russia's Justice Ministry reported Monday's ruling without comment. But Poland's government said the case shows Russia's disregard for international law.

"It is not the first time that Russia has a problem with following the standards of a European state of law," Justice Minister Jaroslaw Gowin said on Polish TVN24.

One of the 15 Polish relatives, Ryszard Adamczyk, said officials in Russia have "their own laws, they disregard international laws."

In Moscow, Leonid Slutsky, the chairman of the committee in charge of relations with the former Soviet nations in the lower house of parliament, said the European Court of Human Rights had tried to walk a middle line in its ruling.

"The judges apparently sought to partly satisfy the Polish party without hurting Russia too much," Slutsky said, according to the RIA Novosti news agency.

He said the issue requires deeper consideration, adding that he wasn't sure that the judges had studied all materials available.

Slutsky said the court ruling is unlikely to have any impact on Russian-Polish ties, saying that while the issue remains an irritant, relations between Moscow and Warsaw are gradually becoming more constructive thanks to economic cooperation.

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