

Poland Set to Demolish 500 Soviet Monuments

March 31, 2016



The Polish government plans to demolish about 500 Soviet monuments throughout the country, head of the Institute of National Remembrance Lukasz Kaminsky said in an interview with online portal Onet.pl, the RBC news website reported Thursday.

Kaminsky — whose institute is responsible for investigating crimes against the Polish nation — said that plans for the demolition of the monuments, would be sent to local authorities in the coming weeks.

These monuments should have been demolished in the early 1990s, he said, and called the preservation of the monuments “a fatal mistake.”

The demolished monuments will be removed and transferred to museums where they can become “a witness of hard times,” Kaminsky said, the RIA Novosti news agency reported.

He added that such measures would not apply to the graves of Soviet soldiers, for which Poland will continue to care.

Soviet war memorials have fallen into disrepair and been regularly vandalized in Poland, where the Soviet role in World War II is viewed with ambiguity or outright hostility. In Russia, the official narrative is that the Red Army liberated Poland from Nazi occupation.

Yelena Sutormina, chair of development of public diplomacy and the support of compatriots abroad chamber, has called on the UNESCO cultural and scientific agency to block the decision of the Polish government, RIA Novosti reported.

This is not the first time Poland has moved to dismantle Soviet monuments and faced a strong negative reaction from Russia.

Last year the Russian Foreign Ministry accused Poland of unleashing a “war on monuments” after they demolished a monument that had been erected to commemorate the camaraderie between Polish and Red Army soldiers, RBC reported.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2016/03/31/poland-set-to-demolish-500-soviet-monuments-a52341>