



# Polish President's Apology for Massacre Viewed as Historic Gesture

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JCR – The statement by Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski apologizing for the July 10, 1941 massacre of some 1600 Jews in Jedwabne, a town in northeastern Poland, is being viewed as a historic gesture, even if controversy remains as to who was responsible. The massacre had been attributed to the German occupiers, but evidence has recently come to light of the involvement of the Polish residents of the town.

Hundreds of Jews were beaten and killed, after which those remaining were herded into a nearby barn and burnt alive. 'For this crime,' said President Kwasniewski in a ceremony marking the 50th anniversary of the massacre, 'we should beg the souls of the dead and their families for forgiveness. That is why today, as a man, as a citizen and as the president of the Republic of Poland, I ask pardon. I apologize in my own name, and in the name of those Poles whose consciences are shattered by that crime.'

The Roman Catholic Church was not officially represented, and the local parish priest boycotted the ceremony. However, the nation's Catholic bishops had earlier (May 27) issued their own apology, in a service of repentance in Warsaw led by the head of the Polish Church, Cardinal Jozef Glemp.

Article on the July 10 ceremony:

[www.thejewishweek.com/news/newscontent.php3?artid=4775](http://www.thejewishweek.com/news/newscontent.php3?artid=4775)

Background information: [wings.buffalo.edu/info-poland/classroom/J/](http://wings.buffalo.edu/info-poland/classroom/J/)

Poland's Bishops Issue Apology to Jews: [www.cwnews.com/browse/2001/05/15604.htm](http://www.cwnews.com/browse/2001/05/15604.htm)