

To: Wojciech Lubawski, Mayor of Kielce
Bogdan Biątek, President of the Jan Karski Association
Participants of the commemoration

President of the Council of Ministers
Kielce, 3 July 2016

Distinguished Mr. Mayor,
Distinguished Mr. President of the Association,

Polish history is rich in many laudable times which we reminisce upon with pride. We must also, however, remember about events which call for contempt. The Kielce Pogrom, the anniversary of which we are commemorating today, was such an event. 70 years ago, soon after the destructible war and the tragedy of the Holocaust, here in Kielce, the blood of innocent people was spilled again. The tragedy is still examined by historians but it must be underlined that no provocation can serve as justification for hatred and violence. There is no consent in Poland for any acts of condemnation on religious grounds, there is no place here for racism. Memory about the crime committed in Kielce is our moral obligation and an important element in the effort of reconciliation.

A great role in this endeavour is played by the Jan Karski Association. I have the greatest respect and recognition for those who in their daily work build bridges among nations.

The Kielce of today, and today's Poland bow their heads in respect before the victims of the pogrom, and draw from the common Polish-Jewish heritage, from the common history of the life lived together. Jews had been here, on Polish soil, from the beginnings of statehood, cultivating their traditions, cultures and faith. Every third inhabitant of Kielce before the war was of Jewish descent. Generations of Poles and Jews grew up, worked and faced their common enemies together. Together they experienced the destruction of wars and the risk of inevitable death for helping their neighbours, as we know from the testimonies of Jews saved by Poles from the Holocaust.

The commemorations of the 70th anniversary of the Kielce Pogrom are a tribute paid to its victims but also proof of the faith that the recovery of historical truth, no matter how difficult, can help build a better future. A future based on dialogue, memory and reconciliation.

With kind regards,

Beata Szydło

Prime Minister