



Press release

Paris, December 7, 2009 – The association, Yahad-In Unum, founded by Father Patrick Desbois, announced its support today for a plan to provide burial services in accordance with Jewish laws for the victims of Nazi mass executions buried in Eastern Europe during World War II. The mass graves, many of which have only been identified in recent years, are the final resting place of Jews killed on the territory of countries occupied by Fascist units of Hitler’s Third Reich.

Yahad-In Unum www.yahadinunum.org is the world’s leading research organization investigating the mass executions of Jews in Eastern Europe, sometimes referred to as “The Holocaust by Bullets,” the title of a book written by Father Desbois. During the past six years, the association has located hundreds of previously unknown mass graves and interviewed over 1,200 Ukrainian and Belarusian witnesses to the executions. The research has been accelerated in recent months as investigators race to locate as many of the graves as possible while the remaining Ukrainians and Belarusians witnesses are still alive.

The idea for the memorial services was proposed by the President of the Russian Jewish Congress, Mr. Yuri Kanner, in coordination with Rabbi Marc Schneier, Director of the U.S. branch of the World Jewish Congress. In August, Father Desbois spoke before the Havdalah in West Hampton Synagogue in New York at Rabbi Schneier’s invitation regarding the work of Yahad-In Unum and the ongoing search for the mass graves.

Yahad In-Unum Director, Marco Gonzalez, commented, “We welcome this initiative to organize a proper burial for the victims of these atrocities and we look forward to joining in the commemoration. In the months ahead, we will continue to conduct further investigations to locate additional graves and will share all relevant information with the organizers of this memorial service to ensure that the victims may finally rest in peace with the dignity that they deserve.”

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