

The Death Camp in Bełżec (SS-Sonderkommando Belzec)

During the German occupation, Bełżec was in the Zamość Kreishauptmannschaft in the Lublin District (Distrikt Lublin) of the General Government (Generalgouvernement).

The death camp in Bełżec (officially Sonderkommando Belzec) functioned from November 1, 1941 to June 30, 1943. It was one of the three death camps established to carry out Operation “Reinhardt” (Aktion Reinhardt), that is, the extermination of Jews in the General Government. It was administered by the SS and Police Leader in the Lublin District, Odilo Globocnik, who was in charge of the Operation. Located in the center of the General Government, Bełżec was the center of liquidation of Jews from ghettos in three districts: the Kraków, Lublin, and Galicia Districts. Transports usually consisted of 40–60 freight cars, with 100–130 people in each of them. They arrived at intervals from March 15 or 16 to the end of November 1942. The Jews were killed in three gas chambers using exhaust fumes from diesel engines. The corpses were buried in mass graves (“Death Pits”). Cremation of the bodies (both of the newly arrived and the bodies that had already been buried in the “Death Pits”) began in October 1942 and lasted until spring, 1943. In 1943 the camp facilities were dismantled and the area was planted with trees. The last Jewish prisoners were sent to the death camp in Sobibór.

In chronological order, the commandants of the Bełżec camp were: SS-Hauptsturmführer Christian Wirth and SS-Hauptsturmführer Gottlob Hering. The personnel consisted of SS-men and guards from the SS training camp in Trawniki.

The number of Jewish victims of the camp in Bełżec amounts to ca. 500,000–600,000, including ca. 300,000 Jews from the Galicia DiOther victims of the camp included Jews from other countries of German-occupied Europe, ca. 1,500 Poles, and an unspecified number of Roma (Gypsies).

Camps map

Concentration camps functionaries

Camps

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