This Wednesday, the Balearic Government has started efforts to exhume Sant Francesc cemetery in an effort to locate the remains of the individuals who lost their lives at Es Campament penitentiary in La Savina.

According to documentation of the day and a study carried out by Eivissa historian Antoni Ferrer Abárzuza as part of the Second Graves Plan of the Balearic Government, 58 individuals —in most cases from Extremadura and Murcia, but to a lesser extent from Madrid, Catalonia, the Canary Islands, Valencia and the Balearic Islands— died at the penitentiary between 1940 and 1942 due to food shortages and unhygienic and unsanitary conditions.

The first day of exhumation work was attended by Ana Juan, President of the Consell de Formentera; Alejandra Ferrer, Vice President of the Consell; Jesús Jurado, Secretary of Productive Sectors and Democratic Memory of the Balearic Government; Rafael Ramírez, Councillor of Social Welfare; Raquel Guasch, Councillor of Heritage; Marc Andreu Herrera, Balearic Director General of Democratic Memory, and Lluís Ruiz and Artur Parrón, President and Vice President of the Eivissa-Formentera Forum for Memory and members of the Graves and Disappeared Persons Commission.

"Restoring victims' dignity"

President Juan shared her hope that "the work started this week will lead to uncovering the remains, certifying what the historical studies tell us and, above all, restoring dignity to the 58 who died in the penitentiary of La Savina and to their families". The President applauded the shared efforts of administrations and the Eivissa-Formentera Forum for Memory.

"The goal is to find and identify them, return them to their families and recover their memory", explained Secretary Jurado, who described the process as "opening up the graves in order to close the wounds". "This is a democratic debt that is still outstanding", Jurado continued, "and we are absolutely committed to righting it".

The aforementioned study, together with the testimonies and documentation collected by memorial associations, indicates that the remains could be buried in the neighbouring *cementeri nou*   in Sant Francesc, located just 3 km from the Franco regime's military colony.

This Tuesday, to confirm whether the individuals who died at the prison were buried at the Sant Francesc cemetery, and whether their mortal remains are still where they were buried, the Aranzadi Science Society began taking steps to perform the exhumation, an intervention included in the Balearic Government's Third Plan for Graves of the Civil War and Francoism 2021-2022.

Crews will begin their efforts at the esplanade of earth in front of the main gate of Sant Francesc cemetery, specifically between rows 1 and 6 on the right side, and they will work under old tombs currently in disuse from between the 1960s and 1980s. This area was indicated as a possible burial place of victims, both by the testimonies gathered during the search and the gravedigger at the cemetery.

Additional work will be conducted in an area that was pointed up as a possible burial site by the Eivissa-Formentera Forum for Memory and included in the Map of Graves of the Balearic Government. That site is a little farther west, in front of a block of columbaria.

The regional government, in collaboration with Eivissa-Formentera Forum for Memory and other memorial associations, researchers and specialists including the Aranzadi Science Society, and the Junta de Extremadura, has already begun looking for DNA of relatives who can help to name the victims of Franco's regime who died at the La Savina camp and were buried in Sant Francesc's cementeri nou.

This is the second time that the Balearic Government participates in a local exhumation. The first was in 2017, when the Eivissa-Formentera Forum for Memory called for an exhumation at the parish cemetery of Sant Ferran. Those operations were carried out by the Aranzadi Science Society with grants from the Balearic Government and the collaboration of the Consell de Formentera.

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