



A team of local and regional government officials paid a visit to the Sant Ferran cemetery where efforts will begin today to locate and ultimately disinter the burial ground located there. In the party were Balearic president Francina Armengol, Formentera's deputy vice-president and patrimony secretary Susana Labrador, regional minister of culture Fanny Tur, deputy vice-president Bartomeu Escandell and community involvement councillor Sònia Cardona.

Money for the upgrades will come from a €16,780 Govern grant for the Eivissa-Formentera forum for remembrance as well as the Formentera Council (€4,000). For the occasion the officials also paid a visit to the forum's president and vice-president, Luís Ruiz and Artur Parrón.

The driving impulse behind the undertaking is to unearth the remains of five individuals —Jaume Ferrer Ferrer, Josep Ribas Marí, Joan Tur Mayans, Jaume Serra Juan and Vicent Cardona Colomar— who died at the hands of pro-Franco forces during the Spanish Civil War. A seven-person crew, headed up by archaeologist and forensic anthropologist Almudena Garcia-Rubio, will spearhead the approximately week-long effort. The cemetery currently belongs to the bishopric of Eivissa and Formentera, whom the officials thanked for their collaboration.

Citing the fact that direct relatives of the victims are still alive today, regional minister Fanny Tur called the effort “a top priority” and expressed her hopes that crews would be successful. Councillor Susana Labrador shared Tur's stance, calling it “an emotional day” as they waited for the outcome of an effort that might lead to the discovery of the remains of five individuals shot down behind the very cemetery on March 1, 1937. “Our hope,” said Labrador, “is that the uncovering of these remains can, at least partly, ease the pain of those they left behind” and the families of other locals that met their end on the island during the war. She said the victims' relatives “to this day don't know where their loved ones have been all these years”.

According to the regional president, the current effort marks the third disinterment of its kind in the Balearics and the first in the Pityuses. She reasoned that “justice had to be served, so that the families could move on, and dignity could be brought to the names of those who died defending democracy”. “When a grave is unearthed, a wound is allowed to heal. Now it's time to heal a great many wounds that remain open to this day,” Armengol concluded. All of the officials

thanked the historical remembrance forum for the part it has played in bringing dignity to the names of these and other individuals who unjustly suffered at the hands of repression under Franco.