

This Monday, Ana Juan, president of the Consell de Formentera, and Francina Armengol, president of the Balearic Government, visited the Sant Francesc Cemetery, where excavations and exhumations by Aranzadi Science Society as part of the regional administration's third Mass Graves Plan (2021-2022), have made it possible to identify Francisco Solano Vera, the first person to perish at La Savina penal colony during the Franco regime. Also on hand for the visit were Alejandra Ferrer, vice president, and cabinet councillors of the Consell de Formentera; Jesús Jurado, director general of democratic memory in the Balearics, and Antonio J. Sanz, the provincial councillor for Formentera. Historian Antoni Ferrer Abárzuza also participated in the explanations.

President Juan remarked, "Eighty years have passed since Francisco Solano died in inhuman conditions at the Formentera prison; it is time for his remains to be buried in his home in Cartagena". Juan described the moment as one of reparation for memory and democratic justice, and praised the Govern balear, Consell de Formentera, researchers and associations that "fight and work to put to rights the memory of the victims of Franco's regime".

Last Thursday, the regional government identified remains recovered in April at the Sant Francesc Cemetery as those of Francisco Solano after having compared samples obtained in the exhumation with the DNA given by two of the deceased's daughters.

Solano is not only the first victim of Franco's repression to be identified on Formentera, but also the first victim identified in the Balearic Islands from outside the archipelago.

The identification of the Cartagena native also confirms that the bodies recovered in April during phase one of excavations and exhumations at Sant Francesc Cemetery, which presented characteristics compatible with six victims of the prison, belong to the other people who died in captivity in Franco's military camp.

As approved by the administration's mass graves and missing persons committee, the Balearic Government will commission a second intervention at Sant Francesc Cemetery as part of the

fourth Mass Graves Plan (2022-2023) spearheaded by the Balearic Secretariat of Democratic Memory.

The goal is to pinpoint the remains of as many victims as possible. In a study conducted by Antoni Ferrer Abárzuza as part of the second Mass Graves Plan, the Ibizan historian concluded that as many as 58 individuals —most from Extremadura and Murcia, but also Madrid, Catalonia, the Canary Islands, Valencia and the Balearic Islands— perished at La Savina penitentiary due to food shortages and unsanitary conditions between 1940 and 1942.

Crews will focus on the back area of the cemetery esplanade –down row 6, where Solano's remains were found– because signs indicate it was there that the prison's dead were interred. Plots near the entrance were apparently reserved for ordinary burials.

21 November 2022
Communications Office
Consell de Formentera