

Poland could open communist secret files

by UPI

WARSAW, Poland - Poland may open its communist-era secret police files if a Warsaw court rules a new law on vetting citizens' past is illegal, media said Thursday.

The controversial law, which went into effect March 15, is being debated at the Polish Constitutional Court at the request of far-left party officials who want Poles to affirm they did not collaborate with the communist regime, Polskie Radio reported.

Polish President Lech Kaczynski said if the court declares the current vetting program unconstitutional, Poland should open all communist police files.

After the fall of communism in 1989, East Germany had a similar dilemma.

German history researcher Georg Herbrtritt said early in the 1990s some Germans wanted to open the files while others were afraid they could lead to civil war.

Under the March 15 law, about 700,000 civil servants, teachers and journalists have to sign an oath declaring they did not collaborate with the former communist regime.

A number of Poles have refused to do so.

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