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Spain dig fails to find poet Lorca's remains

By Raquel Castillo

MADRID (Reuters) - Excavations in southern Spain have failed to find the remains of Spanish poet Frederico Garcia Lorca, whose 1936 killing became a symbol of a brutal civil war, a forensic report said on Friday.

Digging got under way last month on the rocky hillside believed for decades to have been an unmarked grave, and the failure casts doubt on whether Garcia Lorca's body will ever be found.

"No remains of human bones have appeared or other signs belonging to civil war graves," a report by the University of Granada's Archaeology Department said.

Accounting for around 100,000 still presumed dead and missing in the 1936-39 Civil War, mostly shot by right-wing supporters of Francisco Franco, still divides Spaniards.



Members of the media take pictures near a cordoned-off area where Spanish poet Federico Garcia Lorca and others are believed to be buried, in Alfacar, near Granada, in this file picture taken October 28, 2009. REUTERS/Pepe Marin

Few cases are as poignant, though, as that of Garcia Lorca, and investigations were delayed for decades by the civil war, 40 years of dictatorship, an uneasy transition to democracy and legal wrangling

Local authorities ordered the excavation as part of a broader investigation into the remains of civil war victims.



The poet's niece, Laura Garcia Lorca, declined to comment on the report but has repeatedly said the family opposed the excavations, because they did not believe the findings would help heal old wounds.

Garcia Lorca, known for works including his play "Blood wedding," was captured in August 1936 and shot for his suspected leftist sympathies by supporters of a military uprising which took place the previous month.

Spain's most eminent 20th century poet and contemporary of artist Salvador Dali, Garcia Lorca was killed along with a teacher and two anarchists near the southern city of Granada.

The excavation at the Alfacar site on the outskirts of Granada took place on the spot where Manuel Castilla, who said he had helped to bury Garcia Lorca, took Irish author Ian Gibson in 1966. Gibson was not immediately available for comment.

A recent book by Spanish writer Gabriel Pozo, based on interviews with the daughter of the man who arrested Garcia Lorca, said Castilla may simply have misled Gibson.

(Writing by Martin Roberts; Editing by Charles Dick)

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