



Ukrainian Congress Committee of America Illinois Division

Український Конгресовий Комітет Америки - Відділ Ілліной

PRESS RELEASE

UKRAINEUKRAINE

January 24, 2014

Ukrainian Community Condemns Brutal Attack on Civilians **Public Protest**

Sunday, January 26 at 12 noon
Ukrainian Cultural Center
2247 W. Chicago Avenue, Chicago

Chicago, IL - The Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA) Illinois Division condemns the dictatorial government of Ukraine and its brutal attack on civilians by hosting a public demonstration Sunday, January 26th at 12 noon at the Ukrainian Cultural Center.

The UCCA Illinois Division announced the public protest in response to the vicious and savage attacks against protesters and brutal crackdown on protest and dissent by the Ukrainian government's Special Forces, known as Berkut.

About the protests and crackdown

In November 2013, Ukraine was set to sign an Association Agreement with the European Union, which would have brought much needed reforms and stability to the nation. On November 21, 2013, the Ukrainian government, pressured by Russia, abruptly refused to sign the EU Association Agreement. This triggered the first wave of protests that resulted in the government's barbaric attack by Berkut forces on the night of November 30th. As a result, protesters mobilized to form massive peaceful protest in the center square of Kyiv, known as "EuroMaidan". The Maidan brought together close to a million people in a peaceful, non-violent movement that demanded an end to the government's violence, corruption, violations of human rights and demanded a pro-European policy for Ukraine.

After nearly two months of protests in sub-zero temperatures, the government-controlled Parliament passed "emergency" laws without public debate in violation of the Constitution. These laws were specifically designed to crush the protests and eliminate any opposition and free speech within the country, and to consolidate the power of president Yanukovich and prime-minister Azarov.

Protests immediately intensified, and Berkut reacted with brutality and savage violence, beating, torturing, and shooting innocent people. Violence was also targeted at journalists and media with intent to prevent the flow of information. Several protesters have since been beaten, shot and tortured. There have been 5 deaths officially reported, with many more unconfirmed while violence continues in Kyiv. Government administration buildings have been claimed by the opposition in several provinces, protests against the government have emerged throughout the country, and support for the opposition is growing. The world community has reacted with condemnation of the government's brutality.

UCCA Illinois Division

The UCCA is a non-governmental non-profit organization whose mission is to support cultural, educational, and humanitarian activities that emphasize the Ukrainian American heritage and to provide support for Ukraine's newly developing democracy.

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