



The Ukraine List #493

The Ukraine List (UKL) #493
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Chair of Ukrainian Studies, U of Ottawa
www.chairukr.com
www.danyliwseminar.com
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#1

14th Annual Danyliw Research Seminar on Contemporary Ukraine

Chair of Ukrainian Studies, University of Ottawa, 8-10 November 2018

<http://www.danyliwseminar.com>

CALL FOR PAPER PROPOSALS

Final Deadline Reminder: 21 June 2018

The Chair of Ukrainian Studies, with the support of the Wolodymyr George Danyliw Foundation, will be holding its 14th Annual Danyliw Research Seminar on Contemporary Ukraine at the University of Ottawa on 8-10 November 2018. Since 2005, the Danyliw Seminar has provided an annual platform for the presentation of some of the most influential academic research on Ukraine.

The Seminar invites proposals from scholars and doctoral students—in political science, anthropology, sociology, history, law, economics and related disciplines in the social sciences and humanities—on a broad variety of topics falling under thematic clusters, such as those suggested below:

Conflict

- war/violence (combatants, civilians in wartime, DNR/LNR, Maidan)
- security (conflict resolution, Minsk Accords, OSCE, NATO, Crimea)
- nationalism (Ukrainian, Russian, Soviet, historical, far right)

Reform

- economic change (energy, corruption, oligarchies, EU free trade, foreign aid)
- governance (rule of law, elections, regionalism, decentralization)
- media (TV/digital, social media, information warfare, fake news)

Identity

- history/memory (World War II, Holodomor, Soviet period, interwar, imperial)
- language, ethnicity, nation (policies and practices)
- culture and politics (cinema, literature, music, performing arts, popular culture)

Society

- migration (IDPs, refugees, migrant workers, diasporas)
- social problems (reintegration of combatants, protests, welfare, gender, education)
- state/society (citizenship, civil society, collective action/protests, human rights)

****To mark the 85th Anniversary of the Ukrainian Famine (Holodomor), a number of papers/events will be devoted to the Holodomor. Holodomor-related proposals are most welcome****

The Seminar will also be featuring panels devoted to recent/new books touching on Ukraine, as well as the screening of new documentaries followed by a discussion with filmmakers. In 2017, new books by Oleh Havrylyshyn, Yuliya Yurchenko and Mayhill Fowler were featured, as well as the films *The Trial* (by Askold Kurov) and *Alisa in Warland* (by Alisa Kovalenko), with the filmmakers present. Information on the 2016 and 2017 book panels and films can easily be accessed from the top menu of the web site. The 2018 Seminar is welcoming book panel proposals, as well as documentary proposals.

Presentations at the Seminar will be based on research papers (6,000-8,000 words) and will be made available, within hours after the panel discussions, in written and video format on the Seminar website and on social media. The Seminar favors intensive discussion, with relatively short presentations (12 minutes), comments by the moderator and an extensive Q&A with Seminar participants and the larger public.

People interested in presenting at the 2018 Danyliw Seminar are invited to submit a 500 word paper proposal and a 150 word biographical statement, by email attachment, to Dominique Arel, Chair of Ukrainian Studies, at darel@uottawa.ca AND chairukr@gmail.com. Please also include your full coordinates (institutional affiliation, preferred postal address, email, phone, and Twitter account [if you have one]). If applicable, indicate your latest publication or, in the case of doctoral or post-doctoral applicants, the year when you entered a doctoral program, the title of your dissertation and year of (expected) completion. Note that a biographical is not a CV, but a written paragraph.

Books published between 2017 and 2019 (as long as near-final proofs are available prior to the Seminar) are eligible for consideration as a book panel proposal. The proposal must include a 500 word abstract of the book, as well as the 150 word bio and full coordinates.

Films produced between 2016 and 2018 are eligible for consideration as a documentary proposal. The proposal must include a 500 word abstract of the film, as well as the 150 word bio, full coordinates, and a secure web link to the film.

In addition to scholars and doctoral students, policy analysts, practitioners from non-governmental and international organizations, journalists, and artists are also welcome to send a proposal.

The proposal deadline is 21 June 2018. The Chair will cover the travel and accommodation expenses of applicants whose proposal is accepted by the Seminar. The proposals will be reviewed by an international selection committee and applicants will be notified in the course of the summer.

To celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the Danyliw Seminar in 2014, a special website was created at www.danyliwseminar.com. The site contains the programs, papers, videos of presentations and photographs of the last four seminars (2014-2017). To access the abstracts, papers and videos of the 2017 presenters, click on "Participants" in the menu

and then click on the individual names of participants. The 2017 Program can be accessed at <https://www.danyliwseminar.com/program-2017>.

Check the “Danyliw Seminar” Facebook page at <http://bit.ly/2rssSHk>.

For information on the Chair of Ukrainian Studies, go to <https://www.chairukr.com>. (The site is being re-developed).

The Seminar is made possible by the generous commitment of the Wolodymyr George Danyliw Foundation to the pursuit of excellence in the study of contemporary Ukraine.

#2

Journalism and War

Danyliw Seminar 2017 Roundtable

<https://www.danyliwseminar.com/journalism-and-war>

Speakers: Stéphane Siohan (Freelance Journalist, Kyïv, Ukraine) and Oksana Grytsenko (Kyiv Post, Ukraine).

Moderated by Anna Colin Lebedev and Ioulia Shukan (U Paris-Ouest Nanterre, France)

[Videos of the panel discussion are online at <https://bit.ly/2t61zSj>]

by Ainslie Pierrynowski

What does it mean to be a journalist amid the conflict in Ukraine? During the Danyliw Seminar’s panel on Journalism and War, reporters Stéphane Siohan and Oksana Grytsenko delved into their work, roles, and challenges on the ground in post-Maidan Ukraine. Both journalists attested to their commitment to illuminating truth. Yet, as the panel discussion progressed, it became clear that in this war, the truth is often elusive—and much more complex than one might anticipate.

When Mr. Siohan arrived in Ukraine on November 24th, 2013, he was supposed to stay in the country for a week as part of a reporting assignment. Soon after the Maidan protests erupted, however, Mr. Siohan’s excursion in Ukraine turned into a long-term commitment to covering Maidan and the ensuing war. From the beginning, however, Stéphane Siohan grappled with how to explain Ukraine’s “political constellation” as conflict unfolded around him, especially when he started to face pressures to apply a binary view to this convoluted situation. He recalls being asked by commentators “who are the good guys and who are the bad guys? Is it a conflict between Western Ukraine and Eastern Ukraine? Where is the political left and where is the political right?”

In search of a way to ground his coverage of the conflict, Mr. Siohan was struck by the nature of the Maidan protests, noting that it was the first instance in his reporting career

where he had seen people reject the authority of the state. Accordingly, Mr. Siohan's writings on Ukraine emphasized individuals' and particular groups' viewpoints, actions, and stories throughout the protests and the subsequent, ongoing war.

Mr. Siohan noted that his difficulties as a journalist did not end there. An article commissioned by *Elle* magazine, for which Mr. Siohan interviewed an 18-year-old female combatant, took on a seemingly problematic tone when that combatant was revealed to be a member of the far right. Indeed, in Ukraine Mr. Siohan was confronted with battalions whose members seemingly came from all parts of Ukrainian society—members of the radical far right alongside leftists, not to mention individuals from across regional and religious lines. Moreover, what Mr. Siohan terms the “information war,” a battle of words and propaganda, further threatened to blur the reality of events on the ground in Ukraine. For instance, Mr. Siohan relates his jarring experience covering the crisis in Crimea, witnessing Russian paratroopers pass by while other reporters far from the warzone emphatically denied the presence of Russian troops in Crimea.

Therefore, the role of a journalist, as Mr. Siohan's words attest, involves shining a light on the truth—despite seemingly contradictory realities, the challenge of discerning interviewees' identities and allegiances, the lure of simple, binary narratives, and the power of propaganda. Mr. Siohan also stressed the centrality of fairness to the journalist's task. In his own words, when talking to those on the separatist side “the more you understand that they are people...have similar problems...and threats” the better one can paint an accurate image of the conflict. In fact, ordinary people are a key part of Mr. Siohan's work. During the panel discussion, he emphasized the importance of spending time in villages interacting with civilians, as by doing otherwise one risks becoming lost in the war of information.

Oksana Grytsenko likewise described her journalistic duty in terms of exposing the truth. A reporter with the *Kiev Post* whose work has taken her to Georgia in the midst of war and, more recently, to the battlegrounds of eastern Ukraine, Ms. Grytsenko has found that article deadlines, coupled with the complexity and rapid unfolding of events in the warzone, make reporting on this conflict particularly challenging. Ms. Grytsenko also cites the tendency of people caught up in the war to—whether out of fear or intentionally—distort the truth. When encountering abandoned Ukrainian army vehicles in Luhansk Oblast, for instance, Ms. Grytsenko heard civilians attest that the damaged vehicles were empty due to an army defeat that cost the drivers their lives. Further investigation, however, soon revealed that the vehicles had been intentionally abandoned and had been burned to prevent their capture and use by separatist forces.

In addition, barriers to reporting on the truth do not only exist on in the conflict zones themselves. According to Ms. Grytsenko, journalists in Ukraine who cover the war often face pressures to take sides. Ms. Grytsenko commented that whereas journalists in Ukraine are often pushed to omit unsavoury details regarding pro-Ukrainian troops from their articles, one must report misconduct in order to effect change. As Ms. Grytsenko put it, the job of a journalist is, quite simply, to tell the truth. Similarly, when discussing how

she ensures that her coverage of the conflict is balanced, Ms. Grytsenko observed that “it is difficult to remain balanced when you are a citizen of that country” where the war is taking place.

Other factors can be double-edged swords, sometimes serving to further Ms. Grytsenko’s search for the truth and, in other situations, serving to impede it. For instance, Ms. Grytsenko notes that as a woman, she is often perceived as less of a threat than a man and therefore may be better able to bypass checkpoints and access conflict zones. On the other hand, Ms. Grytsenko remarked that male soldiers tend to be much less open with a woman and often don’t perceive women seriously, which can inhibit the interview process. Likewise, Ms. Grytsenko’s hometown initially served as a point of connection between her and the separatist partisans whom she wanted to interview. Nonetheless, as Ukraine’s political web shifted, that same factor began to serve as a dividing force between Ms. Grytsenko and members of separatist groups.

Ms. Grytsenko’s account of how she has worked to confront these challenges speaks to the key role played by trust in her coverage of the war in Ukraine. While recounting her work reporting on the war, Ms. Grytsenko’s words were underpinned by a focus on journalistic ethics. In one telling instance, Ms. Grytsenko mentioned her interaction with a released SBU captive who told her—off the record—that he was affiliated with the separatist cause. Due to this confidential comment, Ms. Grytsenko opted not to publish any of his words, on the grounds that doing so would require her to betray the man’s trust or else lie to her readers. Trust indeed seems to be closely tied to the truth in Ms. Grytsenko’s journalistic work. Both Ms. Grytsenko and Mr. Siohan note that gaining the trust of interviewees—and thereby uncovering the truth regarding the conflict—involves careful listening. Being a journalist, Ms. Grytsenko maintained, means listening and then telling a story.

Overall, the Danyliw Seminar’s panel on Journalism and War was a testament to the role of journalists in illuminating the truth behind the complex and often contested situation unfolding in Ukraine. As the conflict in Ukraine continues, reporters like Stéphane Siohan and Oksana Grytsenko represent an ever-important force in the parallel war of information.

#3

Kule Doctoral Scholarships on Ukraine

Chair of Ukrainian Studies, University of Ottawa

Application Deadline: 1 February 2019 (International & Canadian Students)

<https://www.chairukr.com/kule-doctoral-scholarships>

The Chair of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Ottawa, the only research unit outside of Ukraine predominantly devoted to the study of contemporary Ukraine, is announcing a new competition of the Drs. Peter and Doris Kule Doctoral Scholarships on Contemporary

Ukraine. The Scholarships will consist of an annual award of \$22,000, with all tuition waived, for four years (with the possibility of adding a fifth year).

The Scholarships were made possible by a generous donation of \$500,000 by the Kule family, matched by the University of Ottawa. Drs. Peter and Doris Kule, from Edmonton, have endowed several chairs and research centres in Canada, and their exceptional contributions to education, predominantly in Ukrainian Studies, has recently been celebrated in the book *Champions of Philanthropy: Peter and Doris Kule and their Endowments*.

Students with a primary interest in contemporary Ukraine applying to, or enrolled in, a doctoral program at the University of Ottawa in political science, sociology and anthropology, or in fields related with the research interests of the Chair of Ukrainian Studies, can apply for a Scholarship. The competition is open to international and Canadian students.

The application for the Kule Scholarship must include a 1000 word research proposal, two letters of recommendation (sent separately by the referees), and a CV and be mailed to Dominique Arel, School of Political Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences Building, Room, 7067, University of Ottawa, 120 University St., Ottawa ON K1N 6N5, Canada.

Applications will be considered only after the applicant has completed an application to the relevant doctoral program at the University of Ottawa. Consideration of applications will begin on **1 February 2019** and will continue until the award is announced.

The University of Ottawa is a bilingual university and applicants must have a certain oral and reading command of French. Specific requirements vary across departments.

Students interested in applying for the Scholarships beginning in the academic year 2017-2018 are invited to contact Dominique Arel (darel@uottawa.ca), Chairholder, Chair of Ukrainian Studies, and visit our web site www.chairukr.com.

#4

New Book

David Patrikarakos

War in 140 Characters

How Social Media Is Reshaping Conflict in the Twenty-First Century

Basic Books, 2017

<https://bit.ly/2t8uG7B>

David Patrikarakos is an author and journalist who works for the Daily Beast and Politico, and has contributed to the New York Times, Financial Times, Wall Street Journal and many other publications.

A leading foreign correspondent looks at how social media has transformed the modern battlefield, and how wars are fought

Modern warfare is a war of narratives, where bullets are fired both physically and virtually. Whether you are a president or a terrorist, if you don't understand how to deploy the power of social media effectively you may win the odd battle but you will lose a twenty-first century war. Here, journalist David Patrikarakos draws on unprecedented access to key players to provide a new narrative for modern warfare. He travels thousands of miles across continents to meet a de-radicalized female member of ISIS recruited via Skype, a liberal Russian in Siberia who takes a job manufacturing "Ukrainian" news, and many others to explore the way social media has transformed the way we fight, win, and consume wars-and what this means for the world going forward.

#5

New Book

Ostap Kushnir
Ukraine and Russian Neo-Imperialism
The Divergent Break
Rowman & Littlefield, 2018
<https://bit.ly/2snu9yu>

Ostap Kushnir is assistant professor at Lazarski University in Warsaw, Poland.

This book first proves that the rationale behind Russia's aggressive actions in its neighborhood resides in its goal of achieving certain geostrategic objectives which are largely predefined by the state's imperial traditions, memories, and fears that the Kremlin may irretrievably lose control over lands which were once Russian. In other words, Russia constantly remains an expansion-oriented and centralized state regardless of epochs and political regimes ruling over it. That is its geopolitical *modus operandi* successfully tested throughout history. This book also scrutinizes Ukraine as a young post-colonial and post-communist state which, unlike Russia, is more prone to democratize and decentralize. To understand the logics of the ongoing Ukrainian transformation, its domestic and international developments are assessed in their connection to the Soviet political tradition and the medieval legacy of the Cossack statehood (15–18 centuries). This book outlines differences between the political cultures of Ukrainian and Russian nations. This envisages scrutiny of historical experiences and their impacts on the Ukrainian and Russian state-building, institutional structures, national identity, religious issues, and other features of sovereignty. Based on these discoveries, a structure of symbolic thinking which predefines indigenous understandings of justice and order has been constructed for Ukrainians and Russians.

#6

New Book

Kelly O'Neill

Claiming Crimea

A History of Catherine the Great's Southern Empire

Yale University Press, 2017

<https://bit.ly/2JWnB0a>

Kelly O'Neill is associate professor of history at Harvard University and a faculty associate of the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies.

Russia's long-standing claims to Crimea date back to the eighteenth-century reign of Catherine II. Historian Kelly O'Neill has written the first archive-based, multi-dimensional study of the initial "quiet conquest" of a region that has once again moved to the forefront of international affairs. O'Neill traces the impact of Russian rule on the diverse population of the former khanate, which included Muslim, Christian, and Jewish residents. She discusses the arduous process of establishing the empire's social, administrative, and cultural institutions in a region that had been governed according to a dramatically different logic for centuries. With careful attention to how officials and subjects thought about the spaces they inhabited, O'Neill's work reveals the lasting influence of Crimea and its people on the Russian imperial system, and sheds new light on the precarious contemporary relationship between Russia and the famous Black Sea peninsula.

#7

#FreeSentsov and 70 others!

Oksana Grytsenko

Kyiv Post, 15 June 2018

<https://bit.ly/2HTQsRe>

When the World Cup 2018 football championship started in Russia on June 14, Russia's now-famous political prisoner Oleg Sentsov was 32 days into his hunger strike.

Sentsov, the 41-year-old Ukrainian film director and writer, is a political prisoner, sentenced to 20 years in prison in a sham trial, allegedly for terrorism. His real crime: Opposing Russia's invasion and annexation of Crimea in 2014.

Sentsov is determined to draw attention to dozens of Ukrainians, perhaps 71 by the latest best estimate, illegally imprisoned Russia and Russian-annexed Crimea.

The fear is that his convictions and his principles may cost him his life.

Sentsov only drinks boiled water. To keep him alive, prison doctors started intravenously giving him a glucose solution, which should support the functioning of his internal organs and extend his life for a few weeks. They also moved him to a prison ward to monitor his condition. After the 30th day of a hunger strike, the body suffers irreversible effects.

But Askold Kurov, a Russian filmmaker who visited Sentsov on June 4, told the Kyiv Post that Sentsov “was very determined to go by the end.”

As the world’s eyes are turned to Russia for the World Cup, Sentsov’s strike has drawn more attention to the plight of Ukrainian prisoners in the last month than in the last four years.

“This topic was absolutely unnoticed,” said Mariya Tomak, coordinator of Media Initiative for Human Rights.

There are also some hopes that Russian President Vladimir Putin, if he cares about improving his image, might find this a good time to free the prisoners. He did so before Russia hosted the Olympic games in Sochi in 2014.

“Sentsov’s actions are the extreme way of a peaceful struggle,” said Emil Kurbedinov, a lawyer who is defending several Crimean Tatar political prisoners. “And it gives hope to many.”

Worldwide campaign

President Petro Poroshenko on June 8 met for the first time with family members of Sentsov and other Ukrainians jailed in Russia and Crimea.

On the next day, Poroshenko spoke by phone with Putin. They agreed that Ukrainian ombudswoman Lyudmyla Denisova would visit Ukrainians kept in Russia and Crimea, while Russian ombudswoman Tatyana Moskalkova would meet with Russian nationals kept in Ukrainian jails.

Putin had previously refused even comment on Sentsov’s case, repeatedly calling him a “terrorist.” But in late May Putin had to answer questions about Sentsov in talks with French President Emmanuel Macron. On June 8, European Council President Donald Tusk called on the countries of G7 to demand the release of Sentsov.

An international campaign to free Sentsov reached even Russian state TV, where several filmmakers spoke in his support during the award ceremony of Kinotavr, Russia’s largest film festival, which was broadcast live on June 11.

Possible exchange

Lawmaker Iryna Gerashchenko, who represents Ukraine at the peace talks in Minsk, Belarus, said on June 4 in parliament that Ukraine is ready to release 23 Russian nationals convicted in Ukraine in exchange for Sentsov, Oleksandr Kolchenko, who was sentenced for 10 years in the same case, as well as Stanislav Klykh and Pavlo Hryb.

Historian and journalist Klykh, sentenced to 20 years in prison for allegedly fighting in first Chechen war in Russia, has serious mental problems which he acquired after torture by Russian law enforcement.

University student Hryb, 19, was abducted from Belarus by the Federal Security Service, the Russian successor to the Soviet KGB. He was accused of terrorist activity and faces up to 10 years in prison. He is suffering health problems. “Pavlo needs a special medical regime and a special diet, which he can’t get in prison,” his father Igor Hryb said.

Apart from Sentsov, there are at least two other Ukrainian prisoners who currently remain on hunger strike, Tomak said. They are Volodymyr Balukh, a pro-Ukrainian activist, convicted in Crimea and sentenced to for 3 years and 7 months and Oleksandr Shumkov, who was convicted in Russia for involvement with the Right Sector, a nationalist Ukrainian organization.

Gerashchenko didn’t name the 23 Russians kept in Ukrainian prisons. The only name known definitively is Kyrylo Vyshynsky, who worked at the Kyiv office of the Russian propagandist RIA-Novosti news agency. He was arrested by the Security Service of Ukraine, or SBU, on May 15. Ukraine’s prosecutors accuse Vyshynsky, who has both Ukrainian and Russian citizenship, of state treason for work for Russian state propaganda.

More Kremlin prisoners

The number of Ukrainian prisoners is growing every year. Two Crimean Tatar activists were arrested in Bakhchisaray on May 21: Server Mustafayev, who coordinated Crimean Solidarity, the Crimean Tatar civil movement formed in 2016 to support political prisoners and those families, and Edem Smailov, who is a religious leader of a Crimean Tatar community in Bakhchisaray.

They were accused of links to Hizb ut-Tahrir, a pan-Islamist movement banned in Russia, based on secret FSB recordings in a mosque.

“Now they face up to 15 years in jail, which is more than for a murder,” said Kurbedinov, a Crimean Tatar lawyer and member of Crimean Solidarity.

The criminalizing of political movements, like Hizb ut-Tahrir or Right Sector, is a common strategy used by Russian law enforcement to persecute the activists or simply to create the image of fighting against terrorism, Tomak said.

“A person may be sentenced for terrorism even if he has never committed or even planned any violent actions,” Tomak said, adding that 45 out of 71 Ukrainian political prisoners are held under this pretext.

Hope for freedom

Putin has released only nine Ukrainian political prisoners since Russia launched its war against Ukraine in 2014.

The Ukrainian government secured the freedom of Nadiya Savchenko, Hennadiy Afanasiyev and Yuriy Soloshenko. Turkey intervened to secure the release of Crimean Tatars Akhtem Chygoz and Ilmi Umerov. Yuriy Yatsenko was released from Russian prison thanks to the efforts of his lawyer.

Yuriy Ilchenko managed to escape home arrest in Crimea and reach mainland Ukraine. Khaiser Dzhemilev, the son of Crimean Tatar leader Mustafa Dzhemilev, and Redvan Suleimanov were released after serving their prison terms.

However the Sentsov saga turns out, he is already providing powerful inspiration and hope to families of Ukrainian political prisoners.

One of them is Yevhen Panov, a former volunteer fighter in eastern Ukraine who was captured while entering Crimea. He was there to help evacuate one family to the mainland.

FSB officers tortured Panov for four days and charges him with planning terrorist attacks in Crimea. Panov is jailed in Simferopol and faces up to 20 years in prison. Panov’s brother Igor Kotelianets believes the Russian FSB made up the case.

“We will do all possible to make him free through the prisoner exchange,” he said.

#8

Support Growing for Jailed Ukrainian Director on Hunger Strike in Russia

by Nick Holdsworth
Hollywood Reporter, 18 June 2018
<https://bit.ly/2teZeE1>

The Toronto film festival and the Canadian city's Luminato arts event are the latest to issue statements calling for the release of Oleg Sentsov.

The Toronto International Film Festival and the city's Luminato arts festival have issued a joint statement calling for the release of jailed Ukrainian director Oleg Sentsov, who Monday entered his 36th day of hunger strike in a Russian prison.

The move is the latest expression of support for the imprisoned director from within the international film world and comes just days after author and screenwriter Stephen King added his name to an open letter by PEN America calling for Sentsov's release.

Prominent organizations and film industry figures backing calls for Sentsov's release include the European Film Academy; British directors Mike Leigh, Stephen Daldry and Ken Loach; German filmmakers Volker Schlöndorff and Wim Wenders; British actor Patrick Stewart; Hollywood star Johnny Depp; and Russian activists/Pussy Riot founders Masha Alyokhina and Nadezhda Tolokonnikova.

Last week the European Parliament issued an official statement urging the release of Sentsov and other Ukrainian political prisoners in Russia.

French president Emmanuel Macron has also voiced his support for the filmmaker's cause.

The statement signed by Toronto head Piers Handling, Josephine Ridge, artistic director of Luminato and Anthony Sargent, Luminato's CEO, said: "As organizations that vehemently believe in the right, value and necessity of artistic and political expression, Sentsov and other political prisoners have been denied their basic human rights and their detention is a serious violation of international law.

"As the world's attention turns to Russia for the World Cup, we urge the international artistic community and Canadian government to join us in calling for the immediate release of Mr. Sentsov and 70 additional Ukrainian political prisoners."

The statement was prepared in partnership with Natalia Kaliada, co-founder of the Belarus Free Theater, which is staging a theatrical version of Sentsov's story *Burning Doors* in Toronto next week as part of the Luminato Festival.

Last week Kaliada met with Sentsov's sister Natalia Kaplan in Ukraine and said: "It's clear that the time for 'just words' has passed. What we need now are urgent and immediate actions to ensure that Oleg is released."

She added: "This is not the time for festivities and comradeship at the World Cup in Russia. It's time to leverage political pressure. It's time for moral politicians to speak up and save human lives in Russia."

Sentsov was seized by Russian security forces after Moscow forcibly annexed Crimea in 2014, accused of a terrorist plot to blow up a statue of Lenin and of setting fire to the offices of a Kremlin-loyal political party. He was taken to Russia where — treated as a Russian citizen although he holds a Ukrainian passport — the director was tried by a military court and sentenced to 20 years in prison, based on falsified evidence and witness statements that were later retracted.

Sentsov, who is currently serving his sentence in a high-security prison known as the Polar Bear in Russia's Far North Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous District, announced a hunger strike May 14, calling for the release of other jailed Ukrainians he says are, like him, political prisoners.

Although Sentsov's health has suffered after four years in a harsh prison regime, the director is understood to have rigorously prepared himself to endure a long hunger strike that would coincide with the opening of the World Cup, June 14.

He is on record as stating that he is prepared to die for the cause of freedom of Ukrainian political prisoners in Russian jails.

"There have been mixed reports on the state of Oleg's health in recent days, and information is hard to come by," Irish/U.K. producer Mike Downey told The Hollywood Reporter.

Downey, who is deputy chairman of the European Film Academy and active in the campaign calling for Sentsov's release, added: "Lyudmyla Denisova, the Ukrainian ombudsman, had been due to visit Sentsov last week, but was refused access to the prison. The latest news is that after more than a month on hunger strike, Oleg continues to take liquids and has an IV line with a full range of nutrients, proteins and vitamins and is holding up. Tatyana Moskalkova, Russia's human rights commissioner, said Friday that Sentsov's condition is satisfactory, but it remains to be seen if her request to the Federal Penitentiary Service to permit an independent health examination by Russian and Ukrainian doctors is approved."

#9

European Parliament resolution on Russia, notably the case of Ukrainian political prisoner Oleg Sentsov (2018/2754[RSP])

13 June 2018

<https://bit.ly/2JZ3sKn>

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Russia, in particular its resolution of 16 March 2017 on the Ukrainian prisoners in Russia and the situation in Crimea.
- having regard to the statement of 25 May 2018 by the Spokesperson of the European External Action Service (EEAS) on the cases of several detainees in or from the illegally-annexed Crimea and Sevastopol,
- having regard to the exchange of views in the Foreign Affairs Council on Russia of 16 April 2018,
- having regard to the Order of 19 April 2017 of the International Court of Justice on the request for the indication of provisional measures submitted by Ukraine in the case concerning Application of the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism and of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Ukraine v. Russian Federation),
- having regard to Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, both of which provide that no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and to which the Russian Federation is a party,
- having regard to the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 9 December 1998,
- having regard to the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War,
- having regard to Rules 135(5) and 123(4) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas the Ukrainian filmmaker Oleg Sentsov, who opposed the illegal annexation of the Crimean Peninsula by Russia, was arrested in May 2014 in connection with alleged activities conducted in Crimea; whereas he was treated as Russian citizen despite holding Ukrainian citizenship;

B. whereas in the case of Oleg Sentsov there have been allegations of torture and severe mistreatment leading to the illegal extraction of depositions that have subsequently been given legal value;

C. whereas on 25 August 2015 Oleg Sentsov was sentenced by a court the jurisdiction of which the EU does not recognise, in breach of international law and elementary standards of justice;

D. whereas Oleg Sentsov, who currently serves out a sentence in Russia's northernmost prison in Labytnangi, Yamalo-Nenets, announced an indefinite hunger strike on 14 May 2018;

E. whereas the number of political prisoners in Russia has increased significantly in recent years; whereas the Human Rights Centre Memorial, which was awarded the Sakharov Prize in 2009, published a list on 29 May 2018 with the names of 158 political prisoners;

F. whereas Oyub Titiev, the Chechnya office director at the Human Rights Centre Memorial, was arrested by local police on 9 January 2018 and charged with drug possession; whereas these charges have been denied by Mr Titiev and denounced as fabricated by NGOs and other human rights defenders;

G. whereas the arrest of Oyub Titiev is part of a worrying trend of arrests, attacks, intimidations and discreditations of independent journalists and human rights defenders;

H. whereas human rights defenders and civil society actors, particularly Crimean Tatars, have faced threats, intimidation and arrests;

I. whereas the use of torture, and cruel and degrading treatment has been reported in various cases; whereas to date, these allegations have not been investigated in an appropriate way; whereas torture has been used to obtain confessions and support false evidence of guilt;

J. whereas many of the prisoners and detainees have faced harsh and inhumane conditions in prisons, causing physical and psychological risks to their health; whereas there are prisoners who require urgent medical attention and treatment;

K. whereas restrictive Russian legislation regulating political and civil rights has been extended to temporarily occupied Crimea, resulting in the drastic curtailment of the freedoms of assembly, expression, association, access to information, and religion, as well as in credible reports of intimidation, enforced disappearances and torture;

L. whereas arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, censorship and bans on peaceful gatherings have become an everyday reality in Crimea; whereas several Crimean Tatars

have been arrested, are under investigation or prosecuted; whereas Crimean lawyers providing legal assistance to these arrestees, human rights defenders reporting on cases of politically-motivated enforced disappearance in Crimea and journalists reporting on the situation of Crimean Tatars have also been targeted;

M. whereas occupation authorities in Crimea have systematically and deliberately suppressed freedom of speech in Crimea, pushing out independent media and creating obstacles to the work of professional journalists; whereas on 22 March 2018, citizen journalist and Crimean Tatar activist Nariman Memedeminov, who covered wrongdoings of occupation authorities, was detained by Russian security forces and arrested on the grounds of wrongful accusations; whereas on 21 May 2018, Russian security forces detained another citizen journalist, Server Mustafaiev, after a search in his house in Russia-occupied Crimea, in particular on religious grounds;

N. whereas Russia loses a substantial number of cases in the European Court of Human Rights and fails to implement the judgments delivered;

O. whereas the Russian Federation, as a full member of the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the United Nations, has committed itself to the principles of democracy, the rule of law and respect for fundamental freedoms and human rights; whereas, as a result of numerous serious violations of the rule of law and the adoption of restrictive laws in recent years, there are grave concerns about Russia's compliance with its international and national obligations; whereas the European Union has repeatedly offered additional assistance and expertise to help Russia to modernise and abide by its constitutional and legal order, in line with Council of Europe standards;

P. whereas according to the Russian law on 'foreign agents', NGOs that receive foreign funding and are engaged in 'political activity' must apply for inclusion on a special government list of foreign agents subject to additional and close scrutiny by the government, and are required to state in all publications, press-releases and reports that these have been produced by a foreign agent;

Q. whereas, in reaction to the illegal annexation of Crimea and the hybrid war launched against Ukraine, the EU has adopted a series of step-by step restrictive measures against Russia;

1. Demands that the Russian authorities immediately and unconditionally release Oleg Sentsov and all other illegally detained Ukrainian citizens in Russia and on the Crimean peninsula; recalls that currently there are in total more than 70 Ukrainian political prisoners in Russia and in occupied Crimea;

2. Demands the immediate and unconditional release of Oyub Titiev, Director of the Human Rights Centre Memorial in the Chechen Republic, and all other political prisoners in the Russian Federation;

3. Demands that the Russian authorities cease the intimidation and harassment of the Human Rights Centre Memorial, its staff and other human rights defenders, and allow them to carry out their human rights work;
4. Underlines that the treatment of all prisoners must meet international standards and that all detainees should have access to legal counsel, to their families, to their diplomatic representatives and to medical treatment; stresses that the Russian authorities and judicial personnel bear full responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of those detained, especially in Crimea, in line with the Fourth Geneva Convention;
5. Reminds Russia of the importance of full compliance with its international legal obligations, as a member of the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and with the principles of fundamental human rights and the rule of law enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights and in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
6. Stresses that freedom of assembly in the Russian Federation is granted under Article 31 of the Russian Constitution and under the European Convention on Human Rights, to which Russia is a signatory, obliging the Russian authorities to respect this freedom;
7. Urges the Russian authorities at all levels to recognise the crucial role of human rights defenders as pillars of democracy and watchdogs of the rule of law, and to publicly condemn all attacks against human rights defenders, particularly in the Chechen Republic;
8. Expresses its solidarity with the Ukrainian filmmaker, political activist and political prisoner Oleg Sentsov, who began a hunger strike on 14 May 2018 to press for the release of illegally detained compatriots, and is concerned about the effects of the hunger strike on Oleg Sentsov's health; recalls that Oleg Sentsov, who was arrested in Crimea shortly after Russia took control over the Black Sea peninsula in 2014 and then sentenced on the basis of testimony received under torture, is now serving a 20-year sentence on multiple terrorism charges in a high-security prison camp in the Yamal Nenets region in Russia's far north;
9. Deplores the fact that another convict in the case, Oleksandr Kolchenko, has been sentenced to ten years in prison;
10. Notes that another illegally detained Ukrainian citizen, Volodymyr Balukh, is on hunger strike since 19 March;
11. Calls on the responsible Russian authorities and medical services to give these imprisoned individuals proper medical attention and to respect medical ethics, including by not imposing force feeding or any unwanted treatment that may amount to torture and other forms of ill treatment;

12. Expresses its deep concern that many of the Ukrainian political prisoners, such as Mykola Karpiyuk, Volodymyr, Prysych, Oleksiy Chirniy and Yevhen Panov, have been seriously tortured;
13. Expresses its deep concern regarding the worrying trend of arrests, attacks, intimidations and discreditations of independent journalists and human rights defenders working in Russia, in particular in Chechnya; highlights the significance of civil society and of organisations such as Memorial, and the message that civil society activists everywhere must be free to exercise their most basic rights of freedom of thought and expression; calls on the Chechen and Russian authorities to abide by their domestic legislation and international commitments and uphold the rule of law;
14. Expresses serious concern about the climate of impunity that allows these acts to take place, and calls for the development of legal and other measures to prevent, monitor and effectively prosecute perpetrators of such violence, in cooperation with civil society; underlines the fact that Russia and its Government carries the ultimate responsibility for investigating these acts, bringing the perpetrators to justice and protecting all Russian citizens from unlawful abuse;
15. Draws attention to the fact that Russian authorities in occupied Crimea detained several Crimean Tatars in May 2018, including Sever Mustafayev, Edem Smailov and family members of the political prisoner Nuri Primov;
16. Condemns Russia's violations of international law in occupied Crimea, including the enforcement of Russian legislation, the heavy militarisation of the Crimean peninsula, which threatens the regional security, and the massive and systematic human rights violations targeting, in particular, ethnic Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars;
17. Welcomes the release of Crimean Tatar leaders Akhtem Chygoz and Ilmi Umerov, who were sentenced to prison by Russian courts in the temporarily occupied Ukrainian territory of Crimea in September 2017, and who were allowed by the Russian authorities to leave the peninsula on 25 October 2017; extends its gratitude to all those who worked for their release, including Russian human rights organisations such as Memorial;
18. Reminds the Russian authorities that in their de facto capacity as occupying power exercising effective control over Crimea, they are fully responsible for the protection of Crimean citizens from arbitrary judicial or administrative measures, and, in the same capacity, they are bound by international humanitarian law to ensure the protection of human rights on the peninsula;
19. Emphasises that Russian courts, whether military or civilian, are not competent to judge acts committed outside the internationally recognised territory of Russia, and points out that judicial proceedings in such cases cannot be regarded as legitimate;

20. Reiterates its serious concerns about the ‘foreign agent’ law and the way it is being implemented; considers that the definition of ‘political activity’ carried out by NGOs that accept foreign funding is so broad as to allow, in practice, government control over just about any organised activity relating to public life;

21. Urges Russia to ensure unconditional and unimpeded access to international human rights observers and monitoring missions; calls on international organisations such as the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe to monitor the human rights situation in Crimea more closely and to take appropriate measures;

22. Calls on the European Union’s Special Representative for Human Rights to pay continuous attention to the human rights situation on the Crimean peninsula and in the non-government controlled areas of eastern Ukraine;

23. Calls on the Council and the Member States to remain firm and united in their commitment to the agreed sanctions against Russia and to prolong them, and to consider targeted measures against the individuals responsible for the detention and trial of the political prisoners;

24. Underlines that it is important that the Delegation of the European Union to Russia and the embassies of EU Member States monitor the trials of human rights defenders;

25. Calls on the Presidents of the Council and the Commission, as well as on the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR), to continue to follow the cases of non-compliance of international legal obligations closely and to raise these issues in different formats and meetings with Russia;

26. Reiterates its call on the VP/HR, and on the EEAS, to ensure that all cases of persons prosecuted for political reasons are raised in EU-Russia human rights consultations, when resumed, and that Russia’s representatives in these consultations are formally requested to respond in each case and to report back to Parliament on their exchanges with the Russian authorities;

27. Urges the VP/HR and the EEAS to ensure that the Union seeks every opportunity, within the boundaries of Russian domestic law, to continue to engage with and support Russian civil-society organisations, including those working to promote the values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law;

28. Calls on the EU to make a statement to condemn human rights violations in Russia and the attempt to hide them under the cover of the FIFA World Cup;

29. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States,

the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the President, Government and Parliament of the Russian Federation.

#10

Full list of Members of the European Parliament who voted against the resolution on political prisoners in Russia

Tango Noir, 16 June 2018
<https://bit.ly/2tf4uHE>

On 14 June this year, the European Parliament adopted a resolution that, in particular, demanded “that the Russian authorities immediately and unconditionally release Oleg Sentsov and all other illegally detained Ukrainian citizens in Russia and on the Crimean peninsula”.

Oleg Sentsov is a Ukrainian film maker who lived in Crimea. He stayed there after Russia had annexed the Crimean peninsula; shortly after the annexation, Sentsov was arrested, forcibly “granted” a Russian citizenship, falsely charged with terrorist activities and sentenced to 20 years.

On 14 May 2018, Sentsov went on an indefinite hunger strike demanding to release all Ukrainian political prisoners held in Russia and Crimea – there are more than 70 of them. Sentsov is dying right now.

Out of 627 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), 485 voted for the resolution, 76 voted against, and 66 abstained. Here is a full list of MEPs voted against the resolution on political prisoners in Russia and Crimea. It is hardly a coincidence that almost all the MEPs listed here represent the pro-Putin “red-brown alliance”.

[The full list is at <https://bit.ly/2tf4uHE>. In a symmetrical ideological compulsion to disregard human rights, 37 were from the far-right and 37 from the far-left, with only 2 from non-extremist parties. 20 of the far-right votes were from France, all but one associated with the Front National –UKL]

#11

Trump Told World Leaders Crimea Is Russian Because Everyone There Speaks Russian

by Alberto Nardelli and Julia Ioffe
BuzzFeed, 14 June 2018
<https://bzfd.it/2MsSP00>

Trump made the remarks over dinner with other world leaders at the G7 summit in Canada.

President Donald Trump told G7 leaders that Crimea is Russian because everyone who lives there speaks Russian, according to two diplomatic sources.

Trump made the remarks over dinner last Friday during a discussion on foreign affairs at the G7 summit in Quebec, Canada, one of the diplomats told BuzzFeed News.

The sources spoke on the condition of anonymity as they were not authorised to speak on the matter.

Russia invaded and then annexed Crimea from Ukraine in 2014, leading to widespread international condemnation and sanctions. It also directly led to Russia being kicked out of the then-G8. Russian President Vladimir Putin defended Russia's intervention in Crimea at the time saying that he had the right to protect Russian citizens and Russian speakers in Ukraine.

During the dinner, Trump also seemed to question why the G7 leaders were siding with Ukraine. The president told leaders that "Ukraine is one of the most corrupt countries in the world," the source said.

It is unclear whether Trump's comments were throwaway remarks said in jest, or whether he was signalling a radical departure from current US foreign policy. The White House did not respond to a request for comment.

When he departed the White House to travel to the summit last Friday, Trump caused bewilderment by telling reporters that Russia should be readmitted to the G7, the group of seven nations – the US, Germany, France, Italy, the UK, Japan, Canada – which represent the world's most advanced economies.

On the second day of the summit, Trump again called for Russia to rejoin the group downplaying the country's invasion of Ukraine. "This used to be the G8, not the G7," Trump said. "Something happened a while ago where Russia is no longer in."

Trump also blamed former president Barack Obama for what happened in Ukraine. "Obama can say all he wants, but he allowed Russia to take Crimea," Trump said.

European leaders at the G7, including French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, told reporters that Russia could not be readmitted to the group until there was progress on Ukraine.

"Unfortunately we are not there yet," Merkel said.

Macron said: "The ball is in Russia's court."

Trump repeated the call to readmit Russia during an interview aboard Air Force One while returning from his summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Singapore, explaining that it would make sense to have Russian President Vladimir Putin at the table given that the G7 spends so much time talking about Russia.

Deep differences over trade issues had generated direct and frank conversations between the seven leaders at the summit. Still, despite these, the leaders had been able to find a compromise agreement before Trump stunned the other six by announcing the US wouldn't endorse the agreement because Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau had made "false statements" at a press conference.

#12

Joint Letter to Ukraine's Minister of Interior Affairs and Prosecutor General Concerning Radical Groups

Human Rights Watch, 14 June 2018
<https://bit.ly/2l7vSnn>

June 14, 2018

Minister of Interior Arsen Avakov
Ministry of Internal Affairs
cademician Bogomolets St., 10
Kyiv, 01601, Ukraine
Prosecutor General Yuriy Lutsenko
3/15 Riznytska St.
Kyiv, 01011, Ukraine

Dear Minister Avakov and Mr. Lutsenko,

We are writing on behalf of Amnesty International, Front Line Defenders, Human Rights Watch and Freedom House to ask that Ukrainian authorities urgently take steps to strongly condemn and effectively address attacks and intimidation by radical groups that are promoting hatred and discrimination. While Ukrainian authorities have responded in a few instances to such attacks, the authorities have so far failed in recent months to respond to most incidents, which has created an atmosphere of near total impunity that cannot but embolden these groups to commit more attacks. It is no surprise that the number of violent attacks and threats by such groups is growing, as the inadequate response from the authorities sends a message that such acts are tolerated. We urge you to take effective action to prevent and stop acts that promote hatred and discrimination and hold those responsible to account.

Hiding under a veneer of patriotism and what they describe as “traditional values”, members of these groups have been vocal about their contempt for and intent to harm women’s rights activists, ethnic minorities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) people, and others who hold views that differ from their own. These acts are restricting the peaceful exercise of their human rights and is further shrinking the space for civil society for groups that they believe do not have a right to public representation or participation in civic life

Violent attacks by groups that promote hatred and discrimination

In recent months, our four organizations have noted a significant increase in physical attacks, threats, and intimidation against LGBTI activists, women’s rights activists, and other human rights defenders and journalists. In most cases, those responsible for the attacks have enjoyed impunity for their actions and have not been prosecuted. The National Police of Ukraine has particularly not responded consistently with adequate measures to the relevant threats and attacks. In at least two incidents, described below, national police officers, who were present when assailants threatened or attacked activists, failed to intervene and showed no intention to deal with such crimes.

Since the beginning of 2018, members of radical groups such as C14, Right Sector, *Traditsii i Poryadok*, *Karpatska Sich* and others have carried out at least two dozen violent attacks, threats, or instances of intimidation in Kyiv, Vinnitsa, Uzhgorod, Lviv, Chernivtsi, Ivano-Frankivsk and other Ukrainian cities. The law enforcement authorities have rarely launched investigations into the threats and attacks committed by these groups. In the cases where investigations were launched, there is no indication that effective investigative measures were undertaken, and perpetrators were identified, despite attackers publicly claiming, in some cases, responsibility for the attacks on social media.

On March 8, International Women’s Day, members of radical groups attacked the participants of the Women’s March in Kyiv, physically assaulting them and using pepper spray. The police officers present at the scene merely observed the attacks and took no steps to stop them or detain them. Police filed administrative offense charges against one of the marchers who was attacked, but to the best of our knowledge filed no charges against the assailants. Women’s rights activists were also violently attacked in Lviv and Uzhgorod during their respective peaceful rallies on the same day.

On April 20, about five members of C14, a radical group that promotes hatred and discrimination, acting in their capacity as municipal patrols of the Holoseevsky City District, attacked a Roma settlement in Kyiv. A widely circulated video shows how the masked attackers chased women and small children with rocks and pepper spray after burning down their tents. Two criminal investigations have been launched, but we are not aware of any results.

On May 10, about 30 members of other groups that use violence and advocate hatred disrupted an event organized in Kyiv by Amnesty International, at which it was planned

to discuss human rights violations against LGBTI people in Russia and Ukraine. The attackers blocked the entrance to the venue and shouted death threats at the organizers and participants. Police officers from the Pechersky District Unit present at the scene refused to interfere and made homophobic comments against Amnesty International's staff. It was only after the organizers contacted the police emergency hotline and following the arrival of members of Kyiv City Patrol Police at the scene, that participants were evacuated, but the event had to be cancelled that day. Amnesty International has since filed complaints with the police regarding the police officers' failure to protect the event's participants and organizers from intimidation and discrimination. At time of writing, we have no information about whether an investigation has been launched yet.

On May 19, about 50 members of other groups, including some whom witnesses identified as involved in the violence on March 8 and May 10 in Kyiv, disrupted the Festival of Equality in Chernivtsi. Despite numerous prior meetings and reassurances from the local police, they did not effectively protect the event and allowed clearly identifiable people from these groups into the indoor event venue, putting participants' safety and well-being at risk. The police then led the event's organizers and participants outside on the pretext that there was a bomb threat, where assailants attacked them by throwing heavy objects, including hammers, at them. At time of writing, we have no information about whether an investigation into this incident has been launched.

We are deeply concerned by the inaction of the Ukrainian authorities in responding to the attacks and intimidation described above. The near-total impunity enjoyed by members of groups that promote hatred and discrimination through violent means creates the impression that these attacks are tolerated by the Ukrainian authorities.

“Policing” activities by groups promoting hatred and discrimination

We are also concerned about media reports which indicate that some municipal administrations have recruited individuals from groups that promote hatred and discrimination to conduct “policing activities”, such as patrolling the streets and performing “policing” functions during peaceful demonstrations or pickets. While citizen assistance of law enforcement authorities may be compatible with Ukrainian and international human rights law, such volunteers have no greater power or exemptions than citizens of the general population. They do not have the authority to use force in any circumstance and they may not exercise the powers of restraint, detention, or confiscation, including for example of flags or banners used at a rally.

If any official status is to be granted to volunteer officers and they are to be allowed to use any special powers ordinarily reserved for trained law enforcement, such as the power to use force or detain individuals, these volunteers must be bound by the same standards and mechanisms as regular law enforcement officials. As such they should be fully trained in the law and standards applicable and must be clearly identifiable to third parties so that if they abuse their power they can be held accountable.

We call on the Ministry of Interior, the National Police of Ukraine, the Prosecutor General's Office of Ukraine, and Ukraine's political leaders to meet their obligations to guarantee the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and expression, and the right to safety and security to all people in Ukraine. The perpetrators of these violent attacks should be held to account through independent and impartial investigations. The Ukrainian police must be clearly instructed on how to effectively prevent or stop members of groups that promote hatred and discrimination from using violence and intimidation against ethnic groups, LGBTI people, human rights defenders, and other groups and individuals targeted.

We urge you to swiftly respond to these recent instances of violence and intimidation with unambiguous public condemnation, and conducting prompt, thorough, impartial, and independent investigations to hold those responsible to account. This would be an important first step to preventing these acts from happening again in the future.

We also call on the Ukrainian law enforcement agencies to take effective steps to prevent the unlawful use of force or acts of intimidation by members of groups that promote hatred and discrimination and investigate any complaints about their actions, in order to bring anyone found responsible to justice. We also urge Ukrainian law enforcement agencies to take immediate action to address and prevent discrimination and intolerance within its ranks by taking appropriate action towards officers who use discriminatory or derogatory language towards people they are supposed to protect.

Ukrainian leaders and law enforcement officials should develop an effective set of measures that goes beyond response to crimes and includes regular monitoring and engagement to identify and address problems before they deteriorate into further human rights violations.

Sincerely,

Hugh Williamson
Director, Europe and Central Asia Division
Human Rights Watch

Marie Struthers
Director, Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office
Amnesty International

Andrew Anderson
Director
Front Line Defenders

Marc Behrendt
Director, Europe and Eurasia Programs
Freedom House

#13

Ukrainian Neo-Nazi C14, Known for Racist and Homophobic Attacks, Gets Public Funding for “Patriotic Education”

Halya Coynash

Human Rights in Ukraine, 14 June 2018

<https://bit.ly/2t64sSt>

‘C14’, a neo-Nazi group involved over recent months in anti-Roma, homophobic and other attacks in Ukraine, has become one of the recipients of Ministry of Youth and Sport grants, together with an organization linked to the far-right Svoboda party. The news was first reported by Hromadske Radio a day after the authors of a Freedom House report warned of a sharp increase in political violence from precisely such radical groups in Ukraine and of the danger they pose for Ukrainian democracy.

Three organizations were successful in the competition for ‘national-patriotic education projects’. ‘Educational Assembly’ [«Освітня асамблея»], founded by the head of C14, Yevhen Karas; ‘C14 Sich’, founded by Volodymyr Karas, who shares the same patronymic, surname and address as the head of C14; and Holosiyiv Hideout [«Голосіївська криївка»], whose founders include several members of Svoboda.

Three events by ‘Educational Assembly’, as well as a C14 Sich children’s camp will all get 440 thousand UAH (a little over 14 thousand euros), while Holosiyiv Hideout will receive 760 thousand UAH (nearly 25 thousand euros) for four festivals. The successful projects included ‘National-patriotic education as guarantor of Ukraine’s information security’, a nationwide distance learning centre for such national-patriotic education, and the use of historical simulations as a means of popularizing Ukraine’s historical heritage.

The commission which chose successful applicants for grants is headed by Deputy Minister of Youth and Sport, Mykola Danevych, although he was not present at the final meeting on 8 June. The chair on that occasion was the commission secretary, Mykola Lyakhovych who is the head of the Ministry of Youth and Sport’s Department for National-Patriotic Education. The number of people present at the final meeting seemed rather small, however there are officially four representatives of the Ministry of Youth and Sport, as well as other civil servants on the commission, with 51% of the members from representatives of civic society. There is nothing to indicate how representatives of NGOs are chosen.

Lyakhovych asserts that the competition was held in full accordance with legislation. He claims that the commission cannot analyse the ideology of the organizations which put forward their proposals, and that they merely assess whether the projects meet the priorities outlined for the competition as per the relevant Cabinet of Ministers resolution from 12 October 2011.

Any NGO that has existed for over two years can apply, and while Lyakhovych says that as a citizen, he understands the concern about support for destructive movements, this is not something he, as a civil servant, can influence.

In fact, some scepticism may be justified here, especially given that Lyakhovych himself has a background in the UNA-UNSO [Ukrainian National Assembly – Ukrainian People’s Self-Defence], an extremely far-right movement with views similar to those espoused by Svoboda and C14.

According to this logic, movements whose members do not conceal their antagonism to members of ethnic, religious or sexual minorities could come up with an educational project which would then be allocated taxpayers’ money. This could lead to camps, etc, being run by activists who both espouse and practise intolerance towards minorities and other groups of Ukrainian society.

C14, Svoboda and several other far-right organizations (National Corps, National Druzhyna vigilante groups, for example) have tried to present themselves over recent years as defending Ukraine against ‘separatists’, as promoting ‘law and order’ and as fighting corruption.

Ukraine has been facing the gravest of threats from Russia over the past four years, which can make it difficult to counter the ‘patriotic rhetoric’ that such movements use. This is especially frustrating given the multiple issues with such claims, and with the methods these far-right movements use against Ukrainian citizens either on racist grounds, or because their views, sexual orientation or style of life are not to their liking.

On January 19, 2018, members of C14 and other far-right groups prevented the traditional remembrance gathering in Kyiv to honour Russian rights lawyer Stanislav Markelov and Novaya Gazeta journalist Anastasia Baburova, murdered in Moscow in 2009 by members of a far-right nationalist group. The claim that this had anything to do with ‘fighting separatism’ was simply offensive.

The police on that occasion detained only people who had come for the remembrance gathering, and did nothing to prevent the illegal obstruction of a peaceful gathering. It seems likely that louts from these far-right groups were responsible for the vicious attack on a young Briton, Liam Anthony Tong that same afternoon. Although the young man had a hood on (concealing his brightly-coloured hair), he had facial piercings which would make him a fairly typical target for such attacks.

Anti-Roma pogroms

There have been four attacks on Roma camps in different parts of Ukraine since April this year.

The first such attack on 20-21 April, 2018 was boasted about (in veiled terms) on Facebook by a prominent C14 activist. The Kyiv police initially claimed to have received no

complaints from Roma families driven from a camp on Lysa Hora in Kyiv and to see no reason to take any action. They were forced to change their position and, at least formally, initiate a criminal investigation only after LB.ua posted a video clearly showing families running in terror from the thugs.

It is likely that the 30 young masked thugs who burned down a permanent Roma settlement in Rudne, near Lviv on 9 May were also from far-right groups. While the Human Rights Ombudsman had no difficulty in identifying this (and the earlier Lysa Hora attack) as hate crimes, the police only initiated an investigation into 'hooliganism'. There have since been two more such pogroms – in the Ternopil oblast on 22 May and in Kyiv on June 7.

The police initiate criminal proceedings, and then nothing more is heard.

C14, National Corpus and the National Druzhyna vigilante units are often present inside the courtroom and outside high-profile court hearings. It has to be said that they do often reflect widespread concern, for example, over the initial suspended sentence passed on Yuri Krysin, a known criminal and titushki (hired thug) leader involved in the killing of Maidan journalist Vyacheslav Veremiy.

Their behaviour is often openly lawless. On May 4, 2018, C14 activists seized Rafael Lusvarghi, a Brazilian who not only fought for the Kremlin-backed militants in Donbas, but also provided propaganda to recruit other militants. A Ukrainian court had sentenced him to 13 years' imprisonment, however this sentence had later been quashed, and the case sent back for retrial. Lusvarghi had been spotted by an RFERL journalist living at a Moscow Patriarchate Orthodox Monastery outside Kyiv. The C14 activists grabbed him and took him by force to the SBU [Security Service]. Whatever one may think of the authorities' actions with respect to Lusvarghi's prosecution, the C14 behaviour was highly questionable, and probably criminal.

The same is true of the C14 blocking of the Kyiv-Pecherska Lavra in Kyiv on 8 January 2018 and damage to a car which tried to get through.

In claiming that the Ministry of Youth and Sport was powerless to prevent far-right racists and homophobes from winning grants for patriotic education programmes, Mykola Lyakhovych mentioned the need for a mechanism to be added to the above-mentioned Cabinet of Ministers resolution. In the absence of such, the only available methods for challenging such competitions is to appeal to the Prosecutor General's Office or the Justice Ministry, and implement proceedings and an investigation into the organization's illegal activities.

The SBU were, in fact, forced by the court on 19 May to initiate criminal proceedings against C14 leader Yevhen Karas over the treatment of Lusvarghi. This was on the application of Lusvarghi's lawyer, and there is nothing to indicate whether a real investigation will follow. It is doubtless the lack of firm police action, identified in

Likhachev's report that explains the recent upsurge in political violence and attacks on certain groups by C14 and other far-right groups.

Criminal proceedings are important, but will not let the Ministry of Youth and Sport off the hook. You need only look to the large number of Ukrainians who feel understandably threatened by C14 and their ilk and recall C14's offer to provide head-bashing 'services' for money, to understand that there were and remain compelling grounds for withdrawing these shockingly misallocated grants.

#14

Militias Guarding World Cup Have Links to Kremlin's Foreign Wars

by Maria Tsvetkova

Reuters, 13 June 2018

<https://reut.rs/2MurY4e>

ROSTOV-ON-DON, Russia (Reuters) - Russian paramilitary units providing security for the soccer World Cup included among their members Cossack fighters who took part in clandestine campaigns in Ukraine and Syria that Kiev and Washington condemn as backed by Moscow.

More than 800 members of at least six local Cossack organizations will patrol the streets, fan zones and team bases during the five-week tournament starting on Thursday, according to Cossack leaders and regional officials.

In some places in Russia they will also work on match days as stewards or volunteers, the Cossack commanders said.

At least 19 members of these groups have been identified by Reuters as having fought either alongside Moscow-backed separatist rebels in eastern Ukraine or as Kremlin-backed private military contractors in Syria in support of Moscow's ally, President Bashar al-Assad.

Reuters identified the fighters and confirmed they belonged to the paramilitary groups through relatives, friends and their fellow Cossacks after they died or were captured. The number would likely be much higher if those who are still alive could be included.

The Ukraine government views anyone who fought with the separatists as criminals. The European Union and the United States also treat the separatist uprising as unlawful and have imposed travel bans and financial freezes on dozens of people involved in the fighting or aiding the separatists.

The Kremlin denies providing military support for the separatists in eastern Ukraine. It also says it has nothing to do with Russian private military contractors in Syria. Working as an armed mercenary abroad is illegal under Russian law.

Self-governing and semi-military communities mainly in southern Russia and Ukraine, Cossacks traditionally guarded the borders of the Russian Empire but were repressed in the Soviet era. Today many Cossack militia units are registered and funded by the central government in return for their loyalty. The 19 fighters identified by Reuters were all members of officially-registered Cossack units.

Cossack groups say that any members taking part in armed conflicts do so as private individuals.

But there is evidence that Cossack organizations have been supportive of those deployments. For one thing, they often organize burials with full honors for people killed in combat in Syria and Ukraine, and publish eulogies about them.

Speaking in his office decorated with flags of pro-Russian separatists fighting in eastern Ukraine, Cossack leader Alexander Anishchenko told Reuters about 200 members of the Great Don Army Cossack organization will guard areas outside the Rostov stadium during the World Cup matches.

At a time of fierce fighting in early 2015, a commander in the Great Don Army, Svyatoslav Borisov, posted pictures from rebel-held eastern Ukraine on his social network account, including two of him posing in front of a burnt-out tank.

Borisov told Reuters this week he only delivered humanitarian aid to pro-Russian rebels and did not fight.

“Every person decides for himself. If he likes fighting, he fights,” Borisov said of Cossacks who have fought in Ukraine. “I am a man of peace.”

Roman Zabolotny, a Rostov Cossack who is a member of the Great Don Army, was captured by Islamic State in Syria last year while fighting there as a private military contractor, according to fellow Cossacks.

FIFA's Premier Event

Russia's organizing committee for the Cup referred questions about the Cossack units' role to the Interior Ministry, saying the ministry was responsible for tournament security. The ministry did not reply to a request for comment.

Oleksandr Turchynov, Secretary of Ukraine's Security Council, expressed outrage over their involvement in football's premier tournament.

“The use of Cossack paramilitary groups is, on the one hand, evidence of the inability of the Russian leadership to ensure law and order during the 2018 soccer World Cup using state agencies, and on the other hand, it compromises an official FIFA event,” Turchynov said in a statement to Reuters.

“I believe that it is unacceptable on the part of the international community to consent to these actions.”

The statutes of FIFA, global football’s governing body, state that it “is committed to respecting all internationally recognized human rights and shall strive to promote the protection of these rights”.

“For FIFA, these groups’ involvement represents an outrageous betrayal of the organization’s charter,” U.S. Congressman Eliot L. Engel, the top Democrat on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, told Reuters.

“I fear that rather than providing security at a peaceful, multinational gathering, these forces will instead silence government critics, beat protesters, and crack down on anyone who doesn’t conform to (President Vladimir) Putin’s standards,” he said in a statement.

Asked about the Cossacks’ role, a FIFA spokesperson said the organization has “complete trust in the security arrangements and comprehensive security concept” developed by the Russian authorities and local organizers of the tournament.

Sochi, the Black Sea resort which hosted the 2014 Winter Olympics, will see the biggest deployment of Cossacks with 538 members of the local Kuban Cossack Army taking part, the group’s spokeswoman told Reuters.

Five members of the Kuban Cossack Army have been killed in combat in eastern Ukraine and Syria since 2014, according to local Cossack commanders and people who knew the dead men.

#15

Thug Leader Finally Jailed for His Role in the Savage Killing of Maidan Journalist

by Halya Coynash

Human Rights in Ukraine, 14 June 2018

<https://bit.ly/2MxGw3s>

Yuri Krysin has received a five-year prison sentence for his role in the fatal attack on Vesti journalist Vyacheslav Veremiy during Euromaidan after the Kyiv Court of Appeal overturned the original four-year suspended sentence that had elicited outrage both in Ukraine and abroad.

According to Viktoriya Deineka, the lawyer representing Veremiy's mother, she had asked for a seven-year sentence, the maximum under the article of the criminal code which Krysin had been charged under ('hooliganism'). The prosecutor demanded six years, as he had back in December 2017 before the sentence passed by Oleh Linnyk, then a judge of the Shevchenkivsky District Court in Kyiv.

The court on 13 June noted that there had been nothing, even during the appeal hearing, to suggest that Krysin repented of his actions, nor was there any evidence that Krysin had tried to prevent Veremiy's death from his injuries. This, Deineka explained, was cited as one of the grounds for the appeal, as well as the fact that the first court had ignored the gravity of the crime for which a suspended sentence was insufficient.

Krysin's lawyer, Tetyana Hnyatyuk has said that they will be appealing against the sentence.

Linnyk's suspended sentence on 22 December 2017 was dramatically different from that demanded by the prosecutor. Both Krysin's alleged repentance and his two underage children were given as mitigating circumstances, while the sentence also claimed that Krysin did not have a criminal record, which was entirely untrue. He has been twice convicted of hooliganism and causing bodily injury and judge Linnyk also saw fit to ignore his current criminal record for illegal possession of ammunition.

While Krysin did not fire the shot which killed Veremiy, he was the head of the 'titushki' or hired thugs who dragged Veremiy from a taxi and began beating him, with the ferocity of the attack clearly seen here.

Krysin had admitted to his part in the events, denying only that he killed the journalist. The court established that on February 17, 2014, Krysin agreed to payment of 20 thousand USD for collecting a gang of titushki to attack Euromaidan activists.

At around 21.00 on 18 February, they used a grenade to stop the taxi in which Veremiy was a passenger, dragged him out of the car and beat him with baseball bats. It is believed that it was one of the other titushki, Dzhahal Aliev (also known as Dima Dagestanets, and now in hiding) who fired the fatal shot when Veremiy tried to flee. The 31-year-old Vesti journalist who was married with a small son died shortly afterwards in hospital.

The Krysin trial, and specifically the way in which the charges became so diluted, was given particular attention in the last Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Report on Ukraine. They noted with concern "what appears to be special treatment afforded to the 'titushky, resulting in denial of justice to victims of their crimes".

The details the OHCHR only briefly mentions are certainly damning. 44-year-old Krysin is believed to have been part of a criminal gang with links to Yuri Ivanyushchenko, the close associate of ex-President Viktor Yanukovych, who is suspected of having played a

major role in providing the gangs of titushky who committed numerous crimes against Maidan activists.

Krysin was arrested and remanded in custody on March 29, 2014 over the Veremiy killing charges, however was released into house arrest by a Prosecutor General's Office investigator Yevhen Kotets after Krysin, his wife and lawyer claimed that he was in danger of being killed in SIZO [the remand prison]. The 'threats' and elaborate extortion allegations were supposed to form the subject of a criminal investigation, however the lawyer representing Veremiy's family constantly ran up against a brick wall when he asked for details about the 'investigation', and by December that year it transpired that none had been initiated.

The alleged threats were also used as an excuse to hold the court trial over Veremiy's murder behind closed doors. That in turn made it easier to conceal certain other worrying developments. The most dramatic of these was the quiet disappearance of the murder charges in June 2014, with Prosecutor General's Office [PGO] prosecutor Yevhen Krasnozhon instead initiating new proceedings in which Krysin was charged only with 'hooliganism'.

In August 2014, Krasnozhon supported Krysin's lawyer's application to the court to have his house arrest withdrawn. This was supposedly because Krysin had admitted guilt, had good character references and a pregnant wife and son. At a closed court hearing on Oct 14, 2014 judge Oleh Linnyk allowed the application and released Krysin on only a signed undertaking not to abscond.

Despite public outrage, Krysin remained at liberty until his next arrest on extortion charges in May 2015. Although he had been under a restraint order on serious criminal charges when he committed the new offences, on March 17, 2016, he was convicted of possession of ammunition and given a suspended sentence.

Although the promised criminal investigation into the alleged threats used to justify Krysin's release from custody had never eventuated, he seems to have been under police protection when he committed his next violent crime in August 2016.

In ordinary cases, such a formidable crime record during the trial would have led to Krysin being taken back into custody, or would at least have been viewed as aggravating circumstances when passing sentence. Instead Linnyk passed a suspended sentence.

On 29 March, 2018 Krysin was remanded in custody on different charges which could carry a 10-year sentence.

He and Serhiy Chernes are facing charges over four episodes. Krysin is accused of abetting and encouraging people to abduct and torture a person on 21-22 January 2014; of hurling explosive devices at Maidan activists' barricades on 18 February 2014 (several hours before the killing of Veremiy); of obstructing the protests through the use of

indiscriminate violence. The fourth charge mainly concerns Chemes who is accused of having, on Krysin's instructions, forced Veremiy to the ground and held him there until the other titushki ran up.

Linyk resigned on 25 May, in order to pre-empt a hearing by the High Council of Justice into a motion for his dismissal.

Maria Tomak, Head of the Media Initiative for Human Rights and one of the journalists who has probed deepest into Krysin's past and his connections, once commented that Krysin has a magic effect on judges. He has only to turn up and they're ready to release him. That appears to have changed, though time will turn.

#16

Anastasiya Stanko, Ukraine

International Press Freedom Awards
Committee to Protect Journalists, June 2018
<https://bit.ly/2HP7SOZ>

CPJ is honored to present its 2018 International Press Freedom Award to Ukrainian journalist Anastasiya "Nastya" Stanko.

Anastasiya Stanko is a Ukrainian journalist and TV presenter and a member of the "Stop censorship" movement, an anti-censorship group made up of journalists and media organizations in Ukraine. In 2013, she co-founded the independent media channel Hromadske, which is registered as a non-governmental organization. She previously had worked for the national TV channels Pershiy and TVI.

Since the early days of the Maidan Revolution--anti-government demonstrations in late 2013 and early 2014 that led to the ouster of President Viktor Yanukovich--Stanko covered the protests in Kiev, streaming hours of video.

In March 2014, Stanko was in Crimea covering the referendum and annexation of the peninsula. Two months later, she became a war correspondent, reporting on the conflict in the Donbass area of eastern Ukraine. In June 2014, she and her cameraman were taken hostage by the so-called Luhansk People's Republic and held in the basement of a building in Luhansk city. Two days later, they were freed.

Stanko has produced various video reports and articles about the war, with an emphasis on civilians living in and around the conflict zone. She started a project called "Hromadske.East," which focuses on the stories around the conflict. She has also authored several investigations about the mass shooting on Maidan Square in early 2014, which feature interviews with the police's special forces unit who were charged with killing

unarmed protesters. As a result of these works, Stanko won the main prize at the 2016 Mezhyhirya Festival and was a finalist at another journalism competition.

Stanko continues to report on human rights violations by the police and Ukraine's Security Service in the conflict zone. Her latest documentary, "The Secret Compound," is about people illegally detained by Ukraine's Security Service.

#17

Newly Mapped Data Leads to New Insights

Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 11 June 2018
<https://bit.ly/2JE7aJQ>

After working on the MAPA's Revolution of Dignity in the 2016-2017 academic year, the MAPA team returned to the Great Famine project (Holodomor) for the Spring 2018 term. The previous stage of the Famine project had already produced important insights, and adding new, highly nuanced data promised to facilitate even deeper analysis.

Returning to the Famine project was a natural choice for MAPA, given the Holodomor's importance in Ukrainian history and its research priority status for the Ukrainian Research Institute at Harvard. Not only did the MAPA program begin with the Famine project, HURI has a long tradition of supporting research on the Holodomor, from Robert Conquest's *The Harvest of Sorrow* to Anne Applebaum's *Red Famine: Stalin's War on Ukraine*. Many research fellows have also carried out research on the Great Famine during their time at HURI.

As part of its effort to enrich the Famine web map with more data, HURI brought in demographer Nataliia Levchuk (Ptoukha Institute of Demography and Social Studies, Kyiv) as a HURI MAPA Project Research Fellow for the academic year 2017-1018. The contribution of demographers – in addition to historians – is part of what makes MAPA's Holodomor research unique, and Levchuk has long been a part of this team.

During her first fellowship at HURI in 2013, Levchuk worked with MAPA Project Manager Kostyantyn Bondarenko and MAPA Director Serhii Plokhii to provide estimates of 1932-34 Holodomor losses in terms of excess deaths at a regional (oblast) level, further classifying by urban versus rural areas. To estimate 1933 population losses at the raion level, Nataliia Levchuk and a team of demographers, Oleh Wolowyna, Omelian Rudnytskyi and Alla Kovbasiuk, made population reconstructions of raions for the pre-Famine period 1926-1930 and the year of the famine 1933. They calculated excess deaths as the difference between all deaths in 1933 and expected number of deaths that would have occurred had there been no Famine.

When the estimated values were mapped, the result came as a surprise to the MAPA team. With the 391 raions colored according to the number of excess deaths, they saw that the areas hit hardest by the Holodomor were not areas that specialized in growing grain – as is the case for natural famines. This changed the thinking on the Holodomor.

“Our estimates showed a very surprising pattern, in terms of the geographic distribution of losses,” Levchuk recalled. “Contrary to expectations, the highest losses were found not in the southern steppe regions of Ukraine (Odesa or Dnipropetrovsk), but in the north-central Kyiv and Kharkiv oblasts, which are not the prime grain-growing regions of Ukraine. It was a bit of a puzzle.”

Nuanced data for advanced analysis

To work on solving this puzzle, the MAPA team needed to examine how numerous variables differed across raions. During Levchuk’s 2018 fellowship, they added variables at the raion level, allowing for a much more nuanced analysis. “This time, my task was to try to explore a regional distribution of the 1933 rural population losses at the raion level, and to find possible determinants that might have contributed to such regional differences. We collected a lot of social economic variables and indicators from different statistical publications of that time.”

The new data effectively tripled the number of map layers available in the MAPA atlas for researchers to use, includes population statistics, such as rural population density and ethnic structure; economic indicators, such as grain procurement quotas, planned grain quotas, actual grain quotas, and percentage of fulfillment; geographical information about wheat crops, such as the percentage of land used for wheat, the percentage of crop area owned by independent farmers, collective, or state farms; and collectivization rates.

With these resources in the Famine web map, researchers and other MAPA users can see a more fine-tuned representation of how famine losses varied throughout Ukraine and explore which factors were significant causes of starvation in specific areas.

“Data visualization is a very promising way for us to comprehend quickly a large amount of data and then try to identify spatial patterns and relationships between variables,” Levchuk said. “This is not easy when you have a large data set in tables, but when you create maps, the picture is immediately clear. The MAPA project provides a new and effective aid in finding the answer to complex questions.”

By the end of her fellowship at HURI, Levchuk developed a few preliminary hypotheses. “What we see is that something unique was happening, especially in the central parts of the Kyiv and Kharkiv oblasts. The highest excess deaths were mostly found in the central forest steppe zone of Ukraine, not in Odesa and Dnipropetrovsk, which are the prime grain-growing regions. When we looked at the grain procurement variables, it turned out that in 1932 Kyiv and Kharkiv oblasts got a large reduction in their grain procurement plan.”

The MAPA team was then faced with the question of why these areas had such extreme famine losses when they'd received a reduction in their procurement quotas. It turned out that the origins of the regional distributions of 1933 excess deaths started much earlier than in 1933: the period 1930-32 is very important for understanding what was happening in 1933. "Many raions in Kyiv, Kharkiv and Vinnytsia oblasts had a very good harvest in 1930, fulfilling or even over-fulfilling their quotas. The Soviet government decided to force an increase in their quotas for 1931, likely due to the success of 1930," Levchuk explained.

Notably, changes in grain procurement between 1930 and 1932 varied drastically across Ukraine. In 1931, the government did not intend to collect more grain from the most productive Odesa region but targeted the less productive Kharkiv, Kyiv and Vinnytsia. While quotas increased on average by nine percent throughout the country, raions in Kharkiv, Kyiv and Vinnytsia saw their quotas doubled, whereas the majority of raions in Odesa oblast and some raions of Dnipropetrovsk oblast (the prime grain-growing areas) had a reduction in their quotas.

Moreover, we found that the distribution of the largely increased 1931 grain quotas in Kharkiv and Kyiv oblasts by raion was very uneven and unjustified because it was done disproportionately to the percentage of wheat sown area and their potential grain capacity" said Levchuk. Not surprisingly, Kharkiv and Kyiv were not able to fulfill such unrealistic quotas, possibly triggering the shortage of food by the end of 1931 and the early start of the famine in 1932 in these regions. The high concentration of famine deaths despite the 1932 reduction of quotas for these regions is less surprising given the extreme increase in 1931. There is a strong and significant correlation of 1933 excess deaths in Kyiv oblast with grain procurement quotas in 1930-1932. Other factors in quota decisions could include weather shock and collectivization rates, which Levchuk is beginning to examine now. "Our preliminary analysis shows that there was more procurement pressure on collective farms in less collectivized raions of Kyiv, Vinnytsia and Kharkiv and on independent farmers in more collectivized raions of Odesa oblast" she said.

She's also working on a statistical model that will classify the 391 raions in Ukraine into smaller, homogenous groups based on famine-related data. This model will also help her identify which variables, such as grain procurement quotas, had the biggest influence on famine losses, explaining the variation in excess deaths across Ukraine.

Levchuk recently shared some of her insights with the HURI community at an event titled, "Mapping the Great Famine in Ukraine: Giving Voice to the Voiceless," which is available for viewing on YouTube and includes an overview of the new resources available in the Famine web map. Levchuk also presented at the Association for the Study of Nationalities convention, which took place May 3-5, 2018 at Columbia University in New York, to the Ukrainian community in Boston later in May, and at the Holodomor Research and Education Centre in Kyiv in June. These efforts help to spread factual information about the famine while also introducing a powerful tool that researchers can use on their own to study the Holodomor. Encouragingly, recent website statistics show an increase in visitors to the MAPA site.

Complex causes, devastating outcomes

In addition to a research tool, MAPA serves as a powerful teaching device. Maps can be exported for use in presentations, and the statistics found in the project drive home the magnitude and complexity of the tragedy.

“There are some regions in Ukraine where more than 40 percent, and even more than 50 percent, died due to the famine,” Levchuk noted. “For instance, there are two raions, Tetiiv raion in Kyiv oblast and Hlobyne raion in Kharkiv oblast, where excess deaths constitute more than 50 percent of the rural population. It’s huge. I can’t imagine.”

The large increase in quotas in 1931 was not enough to lead to such a massive famine,” Levchuk emphasized. “We need to distinguish famine caused by excessive grain procurement from famine caused by all kinds of food requisition, which happened since the end of 1932 when most oblasts lagged behind in their grain fulfillment. The Soviet regime started a series of very severe repressive measures against peasants to push them to fulfill their quotas. These measures were spread almost across the whole territory of Ukraine.”

One such measure was a “black board.” When a raion, collective farm, or other entity was listed on a black board, the area was completely blocked. All goods were taken away and no goods were supplied anymore.

“People were essentially condemned to death because everything was taken away. There was no food. Leaders started a requisition of all grain, all reserves, all seed to fulfill these quotas. Finally, they implemented fines in kind, which meant food of any type was taken away,” she explained.

In January 1933, the Soviet authorities sealed the borders of Ukraine. No one was allowed to move away to find food. The peak of the famine was in the first half of 1933. Eighty-five percent of the 3.9 million famine deaths in Ukraine occurred in the six months that followed.

“Overall, grain requisition alone does not account for this famine. Even if all of the grain were taken away, all peasants had some reserves,” Levchuk concluded. “If all food was taken away and people were prevented from leaving... only this can lead to such severe and massive famine.”

The MAPA team invites researchers to use the MAPA tools for their own work, and to get in touch with questions or to share discoveries.

UKL 493, 19 June 2018

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