

**Speech of HE Dr Ihor Kharchenko, Ambassador of Ukraine,  
Delivered at Westminster Central Hall, 22 November 2008 during the  
Commemoration of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Holodomor**

Your Excellencies, Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

Today we are gathered to honour the memory of the victims of the 1932-33 Holodomor in Ukraine. It has been 75 years since millions of lives were cut short by starvation during a time of peace, on the world's most fertile land.

The artificial famine of 1932-33 - deliberately organized by the Soviet authorities - led to terrible losses. According to historians, at the beginning of 1933, more than 25,000 people died of starvation every day in Ukrainian villages. Ukraine is still experiencing the consequences of that ruthless terror.

For decades this tragedy has been kept silent - not mentioned or talked about. Today, films are being produced about the Holodomor, books are being written, and memories of witnesses are being documented. We want to convey the truth to the world about this terrible lesson from our history.

During 2008, Ukrainians around the world spared no effort to draw public attention to the Holodomor. Thirty four countries were involved in the International Torch Relay campaign. The torch, lit in Ukraine as a symbol of memory, was transferred from country to country, from city to city.

The relay took place in the UK from June 29 to July 5. The symbolic Torch was taken inside the British Parliament, the National Assembly for Wales, the Mayor's offices in London and Edinburgh. We are grateful to all those who gladly opened the doors for the Torch, and together with us, remembered the victims of the Holodomor. We are grateful to everyone throughout Great Britain who was part of the organisation of this memorial event.

The Ukrainian-British Joint Declaration, issued by British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko on 15 May, 2008, sets out the agreement of our two countries to co-operate actively to promote the commemoration of the 1932-33 Holodomor and increase public awareness of this tragedy. Ukraine greatly appreciates the attention that the British Government has given to the Holodomor.

I wish to highlight the adoption of important resolutions: On 4<sup>th</sup> September, the Town Council of Keighley recognized the Holodomor as an act of genocide against the Ukrainian people. This was the first time that the 1932-33 Holodomor has been officially recognised as genocide in the UK. On 10<sup>th</sup> October, the same decision was taken by the Rochdale Borough Council.

We are grateful for the important decisions of the Councils of Keighley and Rochdale, and to the Ukrainian community which initiated the adoption of these resolutions. The Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain, the Ukrainian Youth Association and Plast have accomplished great deeds to disseminate the truth about the famine in Ukraine here in the UK. The Committee which has organised events to honour the 75th anniversary of the Holodomor deserves our highest appreciation and gratitude.

On this day, in the Ukrainian capital Kyiv, an International Forum commemorating the 75th anniversary of the Holodomor is being opened by President Viktor Yushchenko. Among the participants are Presidents, Prime Ministers, and prominent political and public figures from around the world.

Together with Kyiv and London, Holodomor anniversary commemoration events are being held today in Warsaw and Washington, Rome and Paris, Toronto and Sydney - everywhere where Ukrainians are present, the victims of the terrible famine are being remembered.

Remembered by Ukraine – Recognised by the world!

By holding such wide-ranging events, Ukrainians around the world wish to convey the knowledge and historical truth about the famine of 1932-33 to every nation and every land, and help ensure that such tragedies never happen again.

This evening, in many thousands of homes, Ukrainian families will light candles in memory of the Holodomor victims. Let us join this campaign and light a candle in memory in our homes tonight.

Let us proclaim the truth about the Holodomor to the world!