

19 December 2013

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Dear Mesdames:
 Dear Sirs:

Re: Reports of undue psychological pressure by Ukraine's authorities and security forces

The Ukrainian World Congress is gravely troubled by reports of undue psychological pressure being exerted by Ukraine's authorities and security forces to suppress the EuroMaidans in Ukraine.

His Excellency Štefan Füle
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More particularly, the Ukrainian World Congress draws your attention to the very perturbing statement issued on 13 December 2013 by the Rectorate of the Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU) in Lviv, Ukraine <http://ucu.edu.ua/eng/news/1739/> to the effect that:

The current situation in Ukraine remains very serious, tense, always dramatic, and very unpredictable as to the immediate outcomes. And yet, there's a very distinct understanding among the UCU community that this turning point in Ukrainian history is a special gift – a blessing for Ukraine and for the millions of our citizens who are exercising their freedom and service to others so selflessly, and whose lives will be changed forever for standing up in solidarity for their values, beliefs and their vision of Ukraine as a strong, prosperous, and moral nation.

Frightened by the solidarity, commitment, and courage of millions of its citizens, as well as the demonstration of support it has inspired worldwide, the Ukrainian government has declared its peaceful intentions and desire to hear the voice of the people and participate in a dialogue with them. Concurrently, however, the Ukrainian authorities have been taking an active offensive, not merely against the political opposition, activists, and journalists reporting on the events, but also against students – the initiators of this broad protest movement.

UCU is clearly high on the list of institutions the police and other authorities are pressuring. Police officers have already visited UCU and interrogated the Dean of the School of Humanities and a few of his colleagues in an attempt to collect information about the students who participated in the demonstrations. We have been informed that a few criminal cases have been opened against UCU students and professors. Some of our students are getting anonymous phone calls warning them not to continue their involvement with the demonstrations and insisting that they become “internet silent”. The machinery of intimidation and repression is in full gear.

Now, more than ever, we are in need of your solidarity and support. We appeal to you and ask that you disseminate information about the shameful state of affairs in Ukraine, the pressure on institutions of higher learning and their students, the violations of constitutional rights and democratic freedoms, the violent attacks against peaceful demonstrators and the mockery of the dignity of people who are only calling for the good and prosperity of their country.

The UCU leadership and our academic community remain fully confident that the magnitude of the protest, its peaceful and profoundly spiritual character, and the commitment of millions of Ukrainians to the values of a free and open, democratic society are irreversibly shaping the future of Ukraine right at this very moment.

(UWC emphasis)

The Ukrainian World Congress also wishes to point out the 14 December 2013 statement made by Lviv Mayor, Andrii Sadovyi, regarding the arrest of a photographer, who captured the beating of youth on the EuroMaidan in Kyiv, the interrogation by the Prosecutor's Office of a museum director and a university lecturer, and the service of a Notice of Suspicion on the Head of the Lviv Municipal Council Internal Policy Department limiting his movement in Ukraine to the area of his official residence registration <http://city-adm.lviv.ua/lmr-news/rubrics/government/215173-tse-nadzvychaino-ne-prosta-sytuatsiia-my-povynni-staty-na-zakhyst-kozhnoho-lviv-ianyna-a-sadovyi>.

In addition, the Ukrainian World Congress was informed that individuals were being pressured to travel to Kyiv on the weekend of 14-15 December 2013 to participate in actions in support of Ukraine's governing authorities under threat of employment termination.

As a result, the Ukrainian World Congress is appealing to the international community to remain vigilant during this upcoming holiday season and closely monitor this troubling situation.

Moreover, the Ukrainian World Congress calls upon the international community to press Ukraine's governing authorities to fully respect the fundamental right to freedom of expression and immediately cease all physical force and psychological intimidation (including interrogations, arrests and detention) aimed at:

- a) discouraging EuroMaidan demonstrators from participating in peaceful protests and limiting their movement to the geographical area of their official residence registration; and
- b) forcing Ukrainian citizens to participate in political actions against their will.

Sincerely,

UKRAINIAN WORLD CONGRESS



Eugene Czolij
President

c.c. His Excellency Viktor Yanukovich, President of Ukraine
Ukrainian World Congress Member Organizations

The Ukrainian World Congress (UWC) is the international coordinating body for Ukrainian communities in the diaspora representing the interests of over 20 million Ukrainians. The UWC has member organizations in 33 countries and ties with Ukrainians in 14 additional countries. Founded in 1967 as a non-profit corporation, the UWC was recognized in 2003 by the United Nations Economic and Social Council as a non-governmental organization (NGO) with special consultative status.