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**TO: NCSJ Leadership and Interested Parties**

**FROM: Stephen M. Greenberg, Chairman;  
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**UKRAINE UPDATE #26**

Deadly violence broke out in Odessa on Friday, May 2, when anti-Maidan demonstrators armed with guns, knives, and bats clashed with pro-Ukrainian supporters and football fans at Sobornaya Square, in the heart of the city. Reports estimate that 46 people were killed and over 100 were injured as a result of the clashes and a fire at the trade union building.

Unrest broke out again on Sunday, when crowds of pro-Russian militants stormed police headquarters and freed 67 pro-Russian protesters, who had been detained on Friday in connection with the deadly clashes.

The interim government condemned the local police for its inaction and for failing to keep order. Eyewitnesses said that police failed to defend peaceful demonstrators from armed attacks on Friday, and protected pro-Russian armed groups, by some accounts.

In the wake of these clashes, the local police leadership, including the head of the Odessa police, have been dismissed. Today, the interim government in Kyiv drafted a new special forces unit and deployed it to Odessa to restore order.

NCSJ contacted Odessa Jewish community leadership, who described the bloodshed on Friday as a great tragedy, and criticized local police actions during the clashes.

According to community leadership, the general security situation in the city hasn't stabilized, although Jewish community programs and religious services are being held as scheduled. Synagogues and Hesed centers remain open.

Contrary to some press reports, the Jewish community is not being targeted, and no one in the community is calling for mass evacuation of Odessa's Jews. Moreover, the Jewish community feels very strongly about Odessa being their home, and the leadership is doing all it can carry on the community programs.

The Jewish community reported their concerns about future provocations. Additional security for the Jewish institutions in Odessa, including video surveillance, has been in place since the beginning of unrest in the country.

Unrest also intensified today in Slavyansk, in the Donetsk region of Ukraine. According to Ukrainian media reports, Slavyansk is surrounded by Ukrainian military forces, as the government continues its anti-terrorist operation. As a result of recent clashes between government troops and pro-Russian separatists, 4 people have been killed and over 30 injured.

The Slavyansk Jewish community confirmed the reports of casualties. The Jewish community is not being targeted, but general unrest in the city and the region overall is affecting the Jewish community. No shots were fired inside the city, but numerous roadblocks have prevented Hased support packages from being delivered to several Jewish community members today, they said.

Ukrainian media also reported incidents in other cities in the Donetsk region (including Kramatorsk, Konstantinovka, Donetsk, and Mariupol) over the weekend and today.

As always, NCSJ will continue to monitor the situation throughout Ukraine, and provide you with timely and critical updates.

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## About NCSJ

NCSJ: Advocates on Behalf of Jews in Russia, Ukraine, the Baltic States & Eurasia, founded in 1971, represents the organized American Jewish community in monitoring and advocating on behalf of the estimated 1.5 million Jews living in the 15 successor states of the former Soviet Union.

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