



January 19, 2014 WASHINGTON, D.C.

**TO: NCSJ Leadership and Interested Parties**

**FROM: Stephen M. Greenberg, Chairman;  
Alexander Smukler, NCSJ President;  
Mark B. Levin, NCSJ Executive Director**

**UKRAINE UPDATE #18**

On Sunday, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry met with his Russian counterpart in Paris to discuss de-escalation of the crisis in Ukraine. No breakthrough came out of the meeting: Sec. Kerry reiterated the U.S. position on Russia's actions in Crimea as "illegal and illegitimate," while Foreign Minister Lavrov called for securing the rights of minorities and decentralization of power in Ukraine.

Today, Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev visited Simferopol, Crimea's capital. Prime Minister Medvedev said that the development of the Crimean peninsula is a priority for the Russian government. He promised to create a special economic zone, improve infrastructure, and increase salaries and pensions there.

Tomorrow, NATO foreign ministers will meet in Brussels to discuss the situation in Ukraine.

The Ukrainian defense ministry has reported a decrease in the number of Russian troops stationed along its eastern border. It is too early to call this a positive sign, since the reduction of troops might be a result of a rotation of military draftees.

NCSJ spoke today with Jewish community leaders in Dnepropetrovsk. They reported that the situation in the city is stable. In recent weeks, Dnepropetrovsk has been more peaceful than in other cities of Eastern Ukraine, especially Kharkiv and Donetsk, where pro-Russian demonstrations have taken place regularly. According to the Jewish community representatives, the Dnepropetrovsk community is united in supporting Ukraine's territorial integrity.

The Dnepropetrovsk Jewish community leadership met on Friday with U.S. Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Wendy Sherman during her visit to Ukraine. In the meeting, the leaders reported no rise in anti-Semitism in the city. However, they said, the Jewish community remains concerned about a possibility of Russian invasion and war, and they

urged the U.S. government to support Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Despite general anxiety about Russia's actions in the region, the Dnepropetrovsk community is preparing for Pesach celebrations.

NCSJ also spoke to the Jewish community representatives in Kharkiv. The situation in Kharkiv has stabilized. The Jewish community is safe, there have been no new provocations, and all programs are being held as scheduled, they reported. The number of Russian troops is decreasing along the border, which is positively influencing the atmosphere in the city, and since the Maidan and the anti-Maidan movements signed a peace agreement last week, no further pro-Russian demonstrations have taken place. However, the Jewish community is discussing possible strategies in case of hostilities with Russian troops.

NCSJ contacted the leadership of the Jewish community in Crimea. The community and the general population is experiencing a "transition" period, they said. Several banks are not operating and some bank accounts have been frozen. Nevertheless, the payment of salaries and pensions has resumed. The Russian government has promised a 25% increase in salaries and social welfare for Crimean residents.

Preparations for Pesach celebrations are taking place as scheduled in Simferopol, Sevastopol, Feodosia, Kerch, and other cities of Crimea. Russian Jewish organization have pledged financial and organizational support to help the preparations.

NCSJ will continue to be in contact with Ukrainian Jewish community and others provide you with timely and critical updates.

---

## 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.

Website: <http://WWW.NCSJ.ORG>

**NCSJ**

email: [ncsjinfo@ncsj.org](mailto:ncsjinfo@ncsj.org)

phone: 202-898-2500

NCSJ is a beneficiary of [The Jewish Federations of North America](#) and the [National Federation/Agency Alliance](#) through its network of Federations.

