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TO: NCSJ Leadership and Interested Parties

**FROM: Stephen M. Greenberg, Chairman;
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UKRAINE UPDATE #16

Russian forces seized one of the last Ukrainian naval bases in the Crimean port of Feodosia today, and the Ukrainian government ordered a massive pullout of their troops from the peninsula.

Yesterday, the White House warned about the possibility of Russian invasion into Eastern Ukraine, voicing concern about the growing number of forces along Ukraine's eastern border. Ukraine's acting Foreign Minister Andriy Deshchytsia said that chances of a full scale war between Russia and Ukraine are rising.

President Obama travelled to Europe today to meet with leaders of the G-7 and China, to discuss additional sanctions against Russia and measures to prevent further escalation of the conflict.

Congress is back in session and will resume debate on a U.S. aid package to Ukraine, which it failed to pass prior to recess. While such aid is essential, partisan divisions over IMF reform provisions in the bill may prevent its passage.

NCSJ today contacted one of the leaders of the Jewish community in Crimea. He reported electricity outages in many cities of Crimea, and said that the volume of electricity supplied to Crimea has been reduced by 50 percent. While hospitals, schools, kindergartens are not currently affected, there is a concern that they may be.

Despite the uncertainty of the situation in Crimea, he said that the community held Shabbat services last week, and is preparing to celebrate Passover.

NCSJ spoke with Jewish community representatives in Eastern Ukraine. They report no rise in anti-Semitism. The Jewish community there, similarly to the general population in the region, is alarmed by the possibility of a military invasion by Russia.

The situation in Dnipropetrovs'k is more peaceful than in Donetsk, where large pro-Russian demonstrations continue. The situation in Kharkiv is stable, despite a number of pro-Russian demonstrations that continue to take place. Over the weekend, hundreds of Russian supporters gathered in Kharkiv and Donetsk.

Kharkiv Jewish community leaders added that while there is some support for Russia among the older members of the local population, the most active participants of these demonstrations are not Ukrainian residents.

They also said that while there was a big concern about possible provocations by pro-Russian groups against the Jewish community of Kharkiv, hundreds of Jews came out last week to celebrate Purim. Celebrations took place without incident.

NCSJ also contacted the Jewish community of Odessa. While anti-Semitism has not grown in Odessa, the Jewish community is worried about provocations targeting Jews. 'The Jewish card' has been played extensively during the crisis, which is extremely alarming to them. The Jewish community of Odessa, like the general population of the city, is fearful about the possibility of a Russian invasion and war.

NCSJ will continue to closely monitor the situation in Ukraine and provide you with critical and timely information.

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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