



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 #8

The situation in Ukraine continues to unfold rapidly. The Verkhovna Rada (parliament) dismissed President Viktor Yanukovich yesterday, and Rada Speaker Oleksandr Turchynov was named acting president.

Former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko has been released from prison. She travelled to Kyiv yesterday, and gave an emotional speech at the Maidan, calling on people to continue protesting.

With her release, the political landscape dominated by the three opposition leaders (Yatsenyuk, Klitchko, and Tyahnybok) is likely to shift, making Tymoshenko one of the major presidential contenders in the just-announced May 25 early elections.

Yanukovich denounced the recent moves by the Verkhovna Rada as coup d'état, calling it analogous to the rise of Nazi Germany in the 1930s. He then fled Kyiv for his support base in Eastern Ukraine. He tried to leave the country via the Donetsk airport, but was blocked by Ukrainian border police. His whereabouts now are unclear.

Since Yanukovich's ouster, the U.S. and EU have said they stand ready to help Ukraine. EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton called on all sides to act responsibly and respect the law and the constitution. U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Geoffrey Pyatt spoke today about the willingness of the United States to ensure that Ukraine and the IMF work closely together to avert an economic crisis.

Russia has denounced the developments in Ukraine as an illegitimate takeover of power by the extremists, and it remains to be seen what role Russia will play on the events in the country in the upcoming days.

There are still concerns about deepening divisions in the country, and radicalization on both

sides.

There has also been some confusion regarding the welfare of Ukraine's Jewish community. NCSJ has consulted with numerous Jewish community leaders, and the Ukrainian Jewish community is not being targeted.

While the Jewish community is not being singled out, general security concerns remain. The Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) is holding its Board of Governors meeting today and tomorrow, and will discuss, among other issues, a special campaign to secure its mission in Ukraine. JAFI issued a statement on Saturday evening promising to extend immediate emergency assistance. The full statement can be read at www.imra.org.il/story.php3?id=63265. Also, JDC has an update about their outreach efforts in Ukraine at www.jdc.org/jdc-field-blog/2014/jdc-delivers-aid.html.

The situation is developing rapidly, and we will continue to closely monitor it and provide you with timely updates. In the following days we will be sending more information about the Ukrainian Jewish community, and the impact of recent changes on its well-being.

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

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.

