



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 #7

The shaky truce reached by the Ukrainian government and the protesters yesterday evening has fallen apart and violence has resumed on the streets of Kyiv. Security forces opened fire on the demonstrators early this morning. By some estimates, 70 protesters have been killed to date, and perhaps 500 hundred more have been seriously injured.

The Ukrainian government has blamed the opposition for breaching the truce and instigating attacks on the security forces.

This violent crackdown on the opposition is contributing to the divisions within the supporters of President Yanukovich and his Party of Regions. Kyiv mayor Volodymyr Makeyenko announced today he was leaving his post and the Party of Regions.

The protests in Maidan and elsewhere around the country continue. In Lviv, Uzhgorod, Chernivtsi, Rivne Lutsk, Ivano-Frankivsk, and other cities, activists have seized regional administrations and public buildings including police stations, security service offices, and prosecutor's offices. In Eastern and Southern Ukraine, smaller scale demonstrations are taking place in Dnipropetrovs'k, Poltava, Donetsk, Odessa, and other cities.

The security situation in Kyiv is volatile. Authorities are struggling to maintain civil order in the city, and by some accounts are instigating further unrest. Prices for food and gasoline are going up. Reports of devaluation of Ukraine's currency, the *hryvnia*, are prompting mass withdrawals of cash.

In the meantime, the foreign ministers of Germany, France and Poland travelled to Kyiv today to meet with President Yanukovich. According to press reports, the EU this afternoon approved some sanctions against Ukraine, including asset freezes and visa bans for those responsible for the violence. The officials targeted by these bans have not yet been determined.

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk also said that President Yanukovich has "expressed willingness" for early elections this year, but this statement remains unconfirmed by Ukraine.

The government's use of force against the protesters has received condemnation worldwide. Yesterday, the United States announced visa bans against 20 senior members of Yanukovich administration. President Barack Obama condemned the violence, warning of "consequences" for Ukraine if it continues attacks against protesters. While President Obama urged both sides to de-escalate the conflict, he said that "we hold the Ukrainian government primarily responsible for making sure that it is dealing with peaceful protesters in an appropriate way."

The U.S. and the EU are continuing to work together on a broader set of coordinated sanctions against Ukrainian authorities.

In contrast, Russia's Foreign Ministry described the violence as an attempted coup by right-wing extremists and accused the West of backing the illegitimate takeover of power.

While none of the religious and community buildings have been directly affected by violence, the Ukrainian Jewish Community is concerned about the general security situation in Kyiv.

NCSJ spoke this afternoon with Rabbi Moshe Asman of the Brodsky Synagogue in Kyiv. All synagogue programs have been moved to private places, he said, but the synagogue itself would remain open for prayers on Shabbat.

Rabbi Asman has urged his members to abandon the city center because of what he described as "anarchy." In addition to the one hundred protesters killed, he said, now bandits are attacking cars and beating people.

NCSJ also spoke with community leader Leonid Finberg. He asserted that the Jewish community has not experienced any particular problems. The entire city is not experiencing widespread in chaos, he said; disruptions are confined to specific areas.

NCSJ spoke next with Chief Rabbi of Ukraine Yaakov Bleich, who reported that his synagogue is open and has good security. The synagogue's school is also open, though some students have not been able to reach it because of problems with transportation. Rabbi Bleich also said that the violence has been largely confined to the city center.

We will continue to monitor new developments, and provide you with relevant 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.

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.

