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TO: NCSJ Leadership and Interested Parties

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UKRAINE UPDATE #6

Violence in Ukraine has resumed today after a short-lived easing of tensions between the government and the opposition.

At least nine people died and more than a hundred were injured as protesters clashed with the police this morning. Thousands of anti-government protesters marched to the parliament building in a move to pressure President Viktor Yanukovich to curb his presidential powers. The police responded with an offensive that broke through the barricades set up by the demonstrators.

According to the opposition, the riot police used live ammunition against the protesters, but these reports are unconfirmed.

Adding to tensions, a far-right group called *Pravyj Sektor* (Right Sector), called on demonstrators to take up arms against government forces. The Interior Ministry and security forces have set an evening deadline for the opposition to cease protests, threatening to "restore order by all means envisaged by law."

Prior to these latest violent clashes, the opposition leaders had agreed to vacate government buildings as part of an amnesty deal. The last of the jailed protesters were released and charges against them suspended. However, the easing of the crisis was short-lived.

On Monday, President Vladimir Putin announced Russia's decision to resume financial support for Ukraine and to release the next payment in a promised \$15 billion financial loan to the country. The move came as the Ukrainian opposition leaders, Arseniy Yatsenyuk and Vitali Klitschko, met in Berlin with German leaders, including Chancellor Angela Merkel.

The U.S. and the EU have been working together on a financial package for Ukraine, but so

far the details of an assistance package and the conditions attached to it haven't been agreed on.

In the meantime, Russia is stepping up its pressure on Ukraine. Moreover, Russia's Foreign Ministry has blamed the EU and the United States and their involvement in Ukraine's domestic affairs for the escalation of the violence.

The situation in Ukraine is extremely alarming. NCSJ condemns the government's use of force against the protesters. We again call on all parties in Ukraine to avoid violence and engage in a constructive dialogue. The U.S. and the EU must continue to work on a possible resolution and develop a comprehensive economic package that addresses Ukraine's immediate needs. Appropriate safeguards are a must, but foot-dragging benefits no one in Ukraine.

We are in touch with the Ukrainian Jewish community and 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.

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