

Ukraine

Response to Information Request Number:	UKR00001.ZLA
Date:	1 September 2000
Subject:	Ukraine: Information on Protests Held by the Rukh Party
From:	INS Resource Information Center, Washington, DC
Keywords:	Ukraine / Rukh / Young Rukh / Opposition Parties / Demonstrations / Protests / Violence

Query:

Were political demonstrations staged by the opposition party Rukh in the Spring of 2000 violently dispersed by Ukrainian authorities?

Response:

News sources indicate that the Rukh party organized and participated in demonstrations in Ukraine in the Spring of 2000. On April 18, 2000, members of Young Rukh (the Party's youth wing) and other nationalist organizations (not named in source) demonstrated outside the presidential administration building. The protesters spoke out against the war in Chechnya and demanded the removal of the Russian naval fleet from the Crimea. This event was covered by an independent television station that has encountered difficulties a result of criticizing the government. Their report included no mention of violence (Kiev STB Television 18 April 2000).

News sources from March 30, 2000 also refer to protests by about 200 students in front of the Kiev City Council calling for a ban of the Communist Party. Young Rukh members were included in the ranks of those protesting. Protesters also called for the release from prison 10 students who were arrested after storming the headquarters of the Communist Party. News coverage of this event did not mention any violence (Novyy Kanal Television 30 March 2000).

On March 2 it was reported that the office of the Rukh party in Lkhansk oblast was vandalized. Furniture was overturned and broken, other office equipment was broken, but no items were removed. Police attributed the incident to petty hooliganism, but party representatives believe that the incident was political in nature. In the fall of 1999 that office was vandalized during the presidential campaign when Rukh endorsed Yurii Kostenko for president (Foreign Information Broadcast Service 22 March 2000).

On December 21, 1999, demonstrations in front of Russian Missions to Ukraine in Kiev, Kharkhiv, Odessa, Lviv, and Simferopol were organized by Young Rukh. Protesters demanded the split of Ukraine from the CIS and the removal of the Russian fleet from the Crimea. There is no mention of these protests ending in violence (UT-3 Television Network 21 December 1999).

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the RIC within time constraints. This response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum.

References

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