



## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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28 November 2005

### UKR100402.E

Ukraine: Information on the "Jewish Community of Kalush," including when the organization was founded; whether and when it was registered with the Ukrainian authorities; whether it had difficulties registering; whether the organization sought assistance from other Jewish organizations during its registration process; whether the founders/leaders of the organization had (and currently have) any problems with the authorities or the community due to their involvement; activities; affiliation to other Jewish organizations, including the synagogue in Ivano-Frankovsk (January 2000 - November 2005)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

The Federation of Jewish Communities of the CIS gives the following address for the "Jewish Community of Kalush": Karakaya str. 3-2, Kalush, Ukraine (FJC n.d.). Attempts to contact the community at the telephone number listed on the Federation of Jewish Communities of the CIS [Commonwealth of Independent States] (FJC) Website were unsuccessful.

In a 28 November 2005 telephone interview with the Research Directorate, the rabbi of Ivano-Frankovsk provided the following information on the "Jewish Community of Kalush" (JCK):

While uncertain as to the exact year the JCK was registered, the rabbi mentioned that it was founded "many years ago" and existed unofficially until it was registered in 1998 or 1999. The rabbi indicated that during its registration, the JCK did not generally encounter any difficulties with the authorities, apart from certain "technical difficulties." When asked to explain the nature of these difficulties, the rabbi stated that the JCK was told that it was not allowed to register as a religious institution in the space it was renting. As a result, the organization opted instead to register under the address of one of the leaders. In order to register, the JCK had to hold an all-member meeting and write the mandate of the organization to submit to the authorities. The rabbi noted that the registration process took approximately six months. During the registration process, the JCK did not seek any formal assistance from other Jewish organizations. The rabbi further indicated that at the time of the JCK's registration, two other Jewish organizations were registered: one in the city of Ivano-Frankovsk and the other in the city of Kalomyia.

The rabbi stated that in general, members of the JCK do not encounter any problems with the authorities or Kalush residents. However, he stated that there have been a few cases of insults directed at members, and a local Jewish cemetery was vandalized, but he could not recall when these events occurred. He added that members of the JCK [translation] "try not to dwell on these cases and

do not pay attention to the insults." The JCK [translation] "renovated" the cemetery after the vandalism.

The JCK is a member of an organization of federal religious communities of Ukraine (the exact name of the agency was unclear). While not maintaining formal relations with any other Jewish organization, the JCK regularly meets with the Jewish communities in Ivano-Frankovsk and Kalomyia for holidays and so on, and can be said to have "unofficial" relations with these communities. There is no synagogue in Kalush, but there is one in the city of Ivano-Frankovsk and members of the JCK attend mainly this synagogue.

The only other references to the present-day Jewish community in Kalush were in an article, published in the newsletter of the FJC, about a delegation of several Kalush Jews who attended a February 2005 reception held for the Israeli Ambassador to the Ukraine in neighbouring Ivano-Frankovsk (FJC 2 Feb. 2005), and in the announcement, in February 2004, of plans by the Chief Rabbi of Ivano-Frankovsk Moshe Kolesnik to open a *kolel* (religious school) for women in Kalush (ibid. 24 Feb. 2004).

On the Website of the International Jewish Cemetery Project (IJCP), the entry for Kalush notes that the town's population of Jews ranges from 11 to 100 (IJCP n.d.). It also notes that an unmarked Jewish cemetery exists in the town, the land for which is owned by the town, which occasionally performs maintenance on the site (ibid.). The entry also mentions, without specifying a timeframe that there have been no reports of vandalism since 1995 (ibid.).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

#### References

The Federation of Jewish Communities of the CIS [Commonwealth of Independent States]. 2 February 2005. "Israeli Diplomat Visits Jews of Ivano-Frankovsk." <<http://www.fjc.ru/article.asp?aid=259047>> [Accessed 30 Sept. 2005]

\_\_\_\_\_. 24 February 2005. "New Kolel for Women in Ivano-Frankovsk." <<http://www.fjc.ru/news/newsArticle.asp?AID=113496>> [Accessed 30 Sept. 2005]

\_\_\_\_\_. N.d. "Listing of All Institutions in Kalush, Ukraine." <<http://www.fjc.ru/communities/instIndex.asp?cid=91679>> [Accessed 29 Sept. 2005]

International Jewish Cemetery Project (IJCP). N.d. "Kalush." <<http://www.jewishgen.org/cemetery/e-europe/ukra-k.html>> [Accessed 30 Sept. 2005]

Jewish Community of Ivano-Frankovsk. 28 November 2005. Telephone interview with the community's rabbi.

### Additional Sources Consulted

The "Jewish Community of Kalush" did not respond to requests for information within time constraints.

**Internet Sites, including:** All-Ukrainian Jewish Congress, American Association of Ukrainian Studies, Anti-Defamation League (ADL), B'nai Brith International, British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Canadian Foundation for Ukrainian Studies, European Country of Origin Information Network (ECOI), European Jewish Congress, Factiva, *Haaretz* [Tel Aviv], Hadassah, Institute for Jewish Policy Research, Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA), *Journal Francophone d'Ukraine* [Kharkiv], Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), *The Ukrainian Observer*, Union of Councils for Soviet Jews (UCSJ), United States Department of State, World Jewish Congress (WJC), World News Connection (WNC).

**Publications:** *Encyclopedia of Diasporas*.

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