



RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

[New Search](#) | [About RIRs](#) | [Help](#)

12 April 2006

UKR101137.E

Ukraine: Treatment of members of the Social Democratic Party of Ukraine (United) [SDPU(U)]; treatment of supporters of Yanukovych; whether there are regions of the country where pro-Yanukovych supporters are in the majority or in control (January 2005 - April 2006)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

Sources such as *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2005* and Ukrainian News differed in their reports on the treatment of members of the Social Democratic Party of Ukraine (United), SDPU(U) (Ukrainian News 27 May 2005; *Country Reports 2005* 8 Mar. 2006, Sec. 2.b), an opposition party which was led by Viktor Medvedchuk (Ukrainian News 6 Feb. 2005).

According to *Country Reports 2005*, the SDPU(U) claimed that "thousands" of its supporters, including many doctors and teachers, were fired in 2005 for their opposition to the ruling party of Viktor Yushchenko (8 Mar. 2006, Sec. 2.b). Media reports indicated that 1,243 people made complaints to the Human Rights Ombudsman after being "pressured or dismissed because of their political beliefs" (*Country Reports 2005* 8 Mar. 2006, Sec. 2.b). In addition, the SDPU(U) claimed its members were being "politically repressed" (Interfax 12 Feb. 2005). Ukrainian News quoted figures from the SDPU(U) claiming that 4,000 of its 12,000 members in Lviv had left the party "because of the pressure exerted on them by political opponents" (27 May 2005).

Citing information obtained from unspecified human rights organizations, however, *Country Reports 2005* stated that "only approximately 5 per cent of the country's 450,000 civil servants had been dismissed and replaced by supporters of the Yushchenko administration," many of whom had reportedly been political appointees under the previous government (8 Mar. 2006, Sec. 2.b).

In its 2005 annual report, the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF) noted that, in Ukraine, many public meetings involving political campaigners prior to the December 2004 elections were banned. Although most of the bans involved Yushchenko supporters, Lviv courts also prohibited some gatherings of Yanukovych-supporting members of the SDPU(U) (IHF 2005).

A report by the *Eurasia Daily Monitor* noted that in February 2005, President Yushchenko replaced Anatoly Blyznyuk, the governor of the province of Donetsk and former ally of Yanukovych, with the "more or less independent" former ambassador to Turkmenistan Vadym Chuprun (11 Apr. 2005). While Yushchenko's opponents denounced this move as an indication of "political

persecution," Yushchenko responded that his government was against such practices (*Eurasia Daily Monitor* 11 Apr. 2005). Ukrainian News, however, quoted him as stating that he did not want supporters of Viktor Yanukovych in his team (13 May 2005).

In April 2005, the *Eurasia Daily Monitor* further reported that the chairman of the Donetsk Region Council Borys Kolesnykov, "a top representative of the old Kuchma regime" and a supporter of Viktor Yanukovych, was arrested and imprisoned for extortion (11 Apr. 2005). Considered a "serious blow to the 'Donetsk clan' and the [Party of] Regions of Ukraine," Kolesnykov's arrest was seen as politically motivated by many and his supporters called for his immediate release (*Eurasia Daily Monitor* 11 Apr. 2005). According to Interfax-Ukraine News Agency, Kolesnykov was imprisoned until August 2005 when he offered a written pledge not to flee the country (Interfax 24 Mar. 2006). As of March 2006, however, the criminal case against Kolesnykov was still open and four courts had agreed that the "criminal case was well justified" (*ibid.*).

The opposition Party of Regions stated that on 7 March 2006, one of its offices in Lviv was set on fire three days after one of the party's activists was physically assaulted in Lviv (UNIAN 7 Mar. 2006). While the Ukrainian Independent Information Agency (UNIAN) had no information on the perpetrators of the attacks, it stated that the police were investigating both cases (*ibid.*). In February 2006, UNIAN reported that a case concerning the abuse of office against a member of the Party of Regions was closed "as there [were] no signs of crime" (*ibid.* 28 Feb. 2006).

On 27 May 2005, Ukrainian News cited claims by SDPU(U) deputy chairperson Ihor Shurma that members of his party were being "politically repressed" in the region of Zakarpattia. Shurma claimed that teachers, doctors, and government officials who were members of the SDPU(U) were frequently being dismissed for their political allegiance and he speculated that many of the criminal charges against party members would be dropped after the April 2006 parliamentary elections (Ukrainian News 27 May 2005). In protest of politically-motivated dismissals, the SDPU(U) asked the president of the European Court of Human Rights to take action (Ukrainian News 10 May 2005) and announced it would block the parliament's activities until the dismissals were reviewed (Ukrainian News 13 May 2005). Further or corroborating information regarding these allegations could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

On 23 May 2005, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) reported that Nina Karpachova, the Ukrainian Human Rights Ombudsperson, had denounced the beating of several SDPU(U) lawmakers by riot police in Uzhhorod on 20 May 2005.

On 14 July 2005, Ukrainian News reported that a Kiev district court issued an arrest warrant for Mykola Dmytrenko, the former first deputy chairman of the Vinnytsia regional state administration and member of the SDPU(U). Reportedly, other members of the SDPU(U) felt that Dmytrenko, who was officially arrested for abuse of office and misuse of government funds, was instead arrested on political grounds (Ukrainian News 14 July 2005). Yuri Lutsenko, Ukraine's Minister of the Interior, however, denied these allegations, stating, "The Dmytrenko case is strictly an economic crime, and statements by his fellow members of the SDPU(U) in defense of a 'victim of political repression' are speculative and provocative in relation to the investigation" (Ukrainian News 14

July 2005).

The Website of Global Security.org contains a colour-coded map of the regions that supported Viktor Yanukovych (Eastern and Southern Ukraine) in the 2004 legislative elections and those that supported Viktor Yushchenko (Central and Western Ukraine) (2004). More recently, a graph showing regional voter support for Yanukovych's Party of Regions (CNN 26 March 2006) in Ukraine's 26 March 2006 parliamentary elections can be found on the Website of the Central Election Commission of Ukraine (Ukraine 26 Mar. 2006).

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 additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

Cable News Network (CNN). 26 March 2006. "Ukraine." *World/Election Watch*. <<http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/election.watch/europe/ukraine6.html>> [Accessed 12 Apr. 2006]

Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2005. 8 March 2006. "Ukraine." United States Department of State. <<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/61682.htm>> [Accessed 9 Apr. 2006]

Eurasia Daily Monitor [Washington, DC]. 11 April 2005. Vol. 2, Issue 70. Oleg Varfolomeyev. "Yushchenko Opponent Imprisoned, Suspected of Extortion." <http://www.jamestown.org/edm/article.php?volume_id=407&issue_id=3296&article_id=2369576> [Accessed 10 Apr. 2006]

Global Security.org. 2004. "2004 Presidential Election." <<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/ukraine/election-2004.htm>> [Accessed 9 Apr. 2006]

Interfax-Ukraine News Agency [Kiev, in Russian]. 24 March 2006. "Charges Against Ukrainian Regional Ex-Official Still Stand - Prosecutor." (Factiva/BBC Monitoring)

_____. 12 February 2005. "SDPU(U) Protesting against Political Repressions in Ukraine." (Factiva)

International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF). 27 June 2005. "Ukraine." *Human Rights in the OSCE Region: Europe, Central Asia and North America, Report 2005 (Events of 2004)*. <http://www.ihf-hr.org/documents/doc_summary.php?sec_id=3&d_id=4057> [Accessed 10 Apr. 2006]

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL). 23 May 2005. "Ukrainian Ombudsman Condemns Reported Beating of Opposition Lawmakers." <<http://www.rferl.org/newsline/2005/05/3-cee/cee-230505.asp>> [Accessed 7 Mar. 2006]

Ukraine. 26 March 2006. Central Election Commission of Ukraine. "Results of Voting in Oblasts of Ukraine, Party of Regions." <<http://www.cvk.gov.ua/vnd2006/w6p001e.html>> [Accessed 12 Apr. 2006]

Ukrainian News Agency [Kiev]. 14 July 2005. "Update: Court Arrests Vinnytsia Ex-First Deputy Governor Dmytrenko." (Factiva)

_____. 27 May 2005. "SDPU(U) Says Its Members Are Persecuted in Zakarpattia Region." (Factiva)

_____. 13 May 2005. "SDPU(U) To Block Parliament's Activity Until Dismissals of People Who Supported Yanykovych in 2004 Presidential Elections Are Reviewed." (Factiva)

_____. 10 May 2005. "SDPU(U) Urges European Rights Advocates to Stop Political Persecution in Ukraine." (Factiva)

_____. 6 February 2005. "Medvedchuk Anxious About No Representation of Southeast Ukraine in Cabinet." (Factiva)

Ukrainian Independent Information Agency (UNIAN) [Kiev, in Ukrainian]. 7 March 2006. "Opposition Mayoral Candidate's Office Reportedly Burnt in West Ukraine." (Factiva/BBC Monitoring)

_____. 28 February 2006. "Ukrainian Prosecutors Said to Drop Case against Opposition Figure." (Factiva/BBC Monitoring)

Additional Sources Consulted

Internet Sites, including: Amnesty International (AI), British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), CNN Election Watch, *The Economist* [London], Electionworld.org, European Country of Origin Information Network (ECOI), Freedom House, Human Rights Watch (HRW), Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Social Democratic Party of Ukraine (United) (inaccessible), United States Department of State.

Publications: *Political Handbook of the World 2005-2006*.

The attached reproduction is a copy of an official work that is published by the Government of Canada. The reproduction has not been produced in affiliation with, or with the endorsement of the Government of Canada.