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Ukraine: The activities of the Ukrainian National Assembly - Ukrainian National Self Defence Organization (Ukrainska Natsionalna Asambleya - Ukrainska Narodna Sambooborunu, UNA-UNSO), including violent activities (2005 - January 2011)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

According to the *Political Handbook of the World 2010*, the Ukrainian National Assembly (Ukrainska Natsionalna Asambleya, UNA) party was created in 1990 and was called the Ukrainian Interparty Assembly, an alliance of extreme-right parties, until August 1991 (PHW 2010, 1522). The party's paramilitary wing, the Ukrainian National Self Defence Organization (Ukrainska Narodna Sambooborunu, UNSO), was created in the fall 1991 (ibid.). The organization is described as "fascist" by the *Political Handbook* (ibid.) and as "neo-fascist" by the Union of Councils for Jews in the Former Soviet Union (UCSJ) (UCSJ 9 Mar. 2007). Several sources present UNA-UNSO as an extreme-right party (ibid. 16 May 2008; Trend News Agency 14 Oct. 2007; RIA Novosti 20 Nov. 2008). A journalist from *Le Monde diplomatique* presents UNA-UNSO as [translation] "the most recognized radical (and militarized) organization" (*Le Monde diplomatique* Aug. 2007), and the *International Religious Freedom Report 2008* published by the United States Department of State describes the group as "extremist" (US 2008). A report published by Human Rights Without Frontiers International (HRWF), a human rights non-governmental organization (NGO) founded in Belgium in 1989, and that has offices in China, Nepal and the US (HRWF 27 Apr. 2008), indicates that UNA-UNSO is the "most prominent nationalist political organization in Ukraine" (ibid. 2010). According to HRWF, UNA-UNSO is "anti-Semitic" (HRWF 2010).

On one of the UNA-UNSO Internet sites that contains English documents, the party exposes its political platform, its ideology and its motto, which is "Ukraine for Ukrainians!" (UNA-UNSO n.d.). The party's mission is the realization of "Ukrainian national idea - an idea of self-affirmation of the Nation and creation of a state with a system of Ukrainian national and social sovereignty of the people" (ibid.). According to UNA-UNSO, the regime in Ukraine is "cosmopolitan and demonstratively anti-Ukrainian", and it is important that immigration be stopped and that the right to live in Ukraine be granted only to the "foreigners of Ukrainian origin who can prove their Ukrainian ancestry" (ibid.). In a text published on its Internet site on 27 February 2005, UNA-UNSO states that the 2004 presidential elections divided the country in two parts- Ukrainian and non-Ukrainian: "It is clear that 'ethnically pure' part of Ukraine voted for Viktor Yushchenko unanimously, while, for example, in Kharkiv region due to the abhorrent 'Russification' resources the votes divided in half." UNA-UNSO obtained 6 percent of the votes in the 2006 elections through a proportional vote system (PHW 2010, 1522). According to HRWF, the

organization did not participate in the 2007 elections (HRWF 2010).

UNA-UNSO activities

On 14 January 2011, some members of Ukrainian nationalist organizations, particularly from UNA-UNSO, demonstrated in front of the presidential administration offices to protest the arrest of ten of their members (*KyivPost* 14 Jan. 2011a; *ibid.* 14 Jan. 2011b). According to *KyivPost* 14 January 2011 article, some members of the Liberty (Svoboda) and Trident (Tryzub) organizations were arrested for destroying a statue of Stalin at the end of December 2010 (*ibid.* 14 Jan. 2011a); according to another *KyivPost* article published the same day, the arrests against which the groups were demonstrating were those of ten members of Trident who were arrested between 8 and 10 January 2011, for possession of weapons (*ibid.* 14 Jan. 2011b).

A 21 December 2010 article by Interfax indicates that the city of Moscow's prosecutor's office launched an investigation into an anti-Russian journal and brochure containing hatred that was published by UNA-UNSO and distributed at the Ukrainian Literature Library in Moscow. The article points out however that Interfax was unable to obtain official confirmation of the results of a search at the library (Interfax 21 Dec. 2010).

Nationalist groups, including UNA-UNSO, protested in July 2010, against Russian Patriarch Kirill's visit to Kiev (AFP 27 July 2010; RFE/RL 27 July 2010; Interfax 27 July 2010). The protest took place calmly (*ibid.*; RFE/RL 27 July 2010). However, on the last day of Patriarch Kirill's visit, an explosion occurred in an Orthodox church in Zaporozhye, in the southeastern part of the country, killing one person and wounding eight (AFP 29 July 2010) or nine others (*KyivPost* 28 July 2010). The article in the Agence France-Presse (AFP) indicates that some nationalist parties, particularly UNA-UNSO, protested against the patriarch's visit, but that it "was not clear if the events were linked" (29 July 2010). According to *KyivPost*, some nationalists protested against the visit but the official motive of the explosion remained unknown (28 July 2010).

According to an Interfax article published in *KyivPost* on 8 April 2010, UNA-UNSO and other nationalist organizations sent a letter to Ukrainian President Viktor Yanoukovitch and organized a protest to show their opposition to the exposition on Polish and Jewish victims of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists - Ukrainian Insurgent Army (OUN-UIA); the protest took place without an incident.

Media indicates that the Investigative Committee of the Prosecutor General's Office in Russia stated that members of UNA-UNSO fought alongside Georgian troops in the armed conflict between Russia and Georgia in 2008 (*The Times* 25 Aug. 2009; RFE/RL 25 Aug. 2009; RIA Novosti 24 Aug. 2009; IPN 25 Aug. 2009). The party denied these allegations (*ibid.*; RIA Novosti 24 Aug. 2009; RFE/RL 25 Aug. 2009).

In May 2008, a scuffle between Ukrainian nationalists and pro-Russian activists took place during the 225th anniversary of Russia's Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol (AFP 11 May 2008; *KyivPost* 12 May 2008). The police intervened to end the fight and arrested about 10 UNA-UNSO members (*ibid.*; AFP 11 May 2008).

A 20 November 2008 article by the Russian international information agency RIA Novosti indicates that UNA-UNSO published a black list of scientists and media who, according to the organization, adhere to [translation] "an anti-Ukraine policy".

The Union of Councils for Jews in the Former Soviet Union (UCSJ) states that, according to an article published 5 March 2007 in *Segodnya*, a local newspaper, about 50 members of UNA-UNSO held an anti-African rally near the Shulyavsky market in Kiev, while giving the fascist salute and yelling slogans such as "Ukraine for Ukrainians!" (UCSJ 9 March 2007).

UNA-UNSO and other nationalist groups also held a demonstration in Kiev in October 2007 to demand official recognition of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (Trend News Agency 14 Oct. 2007; Interfax 14 Oct. 2007). The police cordoned off areas to separate nationalist demonstrators from activists who oppose the activities of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (ibid.; Trend News Agency 14 Oct. 2007).

According to Trend News Agency, UNA-UNSO has a licence to train in the forest (ibid.). Furthermore, its members "claim to have stopped hating Jews and burning Russian flags" (ibid.). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

According to a 7 November 2006 article by the Ukrainian News Agency, during the 89th anniversary of the October Revolution, about 300 members of nationalist groups, particularly from UNA-UNSO, gathered in Kiev; no incident was reported. According to that same news agency, five members of UNA-UNSO carried out a hunger strike in May 2006 to protest Dnipropetrovsk municipal council's decision to grant the Russian language the status of a regional language (Ukrainian News Agency 31 May 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 sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

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Oral sources: Attempts to contact a journalist at *KyivPost* and representatives from Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group (KHRPG) and Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union (UHHRU) were unsuccessful.

Internet sites, including: Amnesty International (AI), British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'homme (FIDH), Freedom House, Human Rights First, Human Rights Watch, I.F. Kuras Institute of Political and Ethnic Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, International Organization for Migration (IOM), Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group (KHRPG), Organisation pour la sécurité et la coopération en Europe (OSCE), Stephen Roth Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism and Racism, Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union (UHHRU), United Nations - Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Jewish Congress (WJC).

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