



## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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30 August 2004

### UKR42849.E

Ukraine: Ideology, goals, organization and activities of the Ukrainian Nationalist Assembly-Ukrainian Nationalist Self-Defense Organization (UNA-UNSO); treatment of UNA-UNSO members by the authorities (January 1999 - August 2004)  
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

#### **The Ukrainian Nationalist Assembly-Ukrainian Nationalist Self-Defense Organization (UNA-UNSO), Its Ideology, Goals and Organization**

Established in 1990 (UNA-UNSO n.d.a) and based in Kiev (ibid. n.d.c), the Ukrainian Nationalist Assembly-Ukrainian Nationalist Self-Defense Organization (UNA-UNSO) has been described as a paramilitary entity (ibid. n.d.b; *Trud* 5 Dec. 2000), a "neo-fascist group" (*FSU Monitor* 14 Jan. 2001), and a radical (Ukraine Public Radio Online 18 Mar. 2003; Interfax 9 Mar. 2001), anti-Semitic (BBC 26 Dec. 2002; *FSU Monitor* 19 Jan. 2001), extreme (UPI 3 Feb. 2002; RFE/RL 20 Nov. 2001), right-wing (ibid.; RFE/RL 20 Nov. 2001), nationalist party (Interfax 9 July 2004; WNC 27 Dec. 2002; UPI 3 Feb. 2002; Interfax 9 Mar. 2001; BBC 10 Mar. 2001; *Trud* 5 Dec. 2000; AP 4 Apr. 2000). Two news reports indicated that UNA is the nationalist party, while UNSO is its paramilitary wing (RFE/RL 20 Nov. 2001; *Trud* 5 Dec. 2000). According to a report in the Moscow-based Russian daily newspaper, *Trud*, UNA-UNSO is "one of the most aggressive" nationalist organizations in the Ukraine (5 Dec. 2000). The news report goes on to say: "[o]rganized along the lines of the Sicilian mafia, the UNA-UNSO 'family' is an extraordinarily secret organization. Its membership directory is known only by the heads of certain structures" (*Trud* 5 Dec. 2000).

*Obshchaya Gazeta*, a Moscow-based Russian-language weekly newspaper reported that the "prophet" of UNA-UNSO ideology is Dmitriy Dontsov, a philosopher that "divided the whole world into Cossacks and swineherds. The UNSO people have declared themselves Cossacks" (11 Jan. 2001). Information on the Website of UNA-UNSO indicates that the organization has "imperialist aspirations" (UNA-UNSO n.d.b), and that its aims are:

...to overthrow the current Ukrainian government, because it is anti-national; to fight the mafia, because it is criminal; to fight homosexuals, because they are an aberration of nature; to fight the Jews, because they own all the banks and media....The IRA [Irish Republican Army], the Kurdish resistance movement, the Afghan Mujahedin, [and] the Cuban revolutionaries are all role models (ibid. n.d.c).

The organization's "dream [is the] total economic independence of Ukraine

from Russia" (*FSU Monitor* 14 Mar. 2000). Its domestic policy is premised on the following ideas:

...social equality, opposition to "fat cats," redistribution of the national income in favor of workers, the active involvement of a strong government in the economy, ...as well as traditional values of the family, the people, discipline and the state (UNA-UNSO n.d.b).

As at the end of 2002, UNA-UNSO was led by Andriy Shkil (UNA-UNSO n.d.b; WNC 27 Dec. 2002; *Kyiv Post* 18 Apr. 2002; RFE/RL 22 Mar. 2001; Intelnews 27 Dec. 2000), who, in 2002, was elected into parliament (*Kyiv Post* 18 Apr. 2002). Information on whether Shkil continues to be the leader of UNA-UNSO in 2004 could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

In the period between 1994 and 1996, the organization established branches in each of the provinces of the Ukraine, as well as in Moscow (UNA-UNSO n.d.b). Over the years, UNA-UNSO successfully expanded its strength and influence from western Ukraine eastwards (ibid. n.d.b).

In 1995, UNA-UNSO was temporarily banned (RFE/RL 30 June 2003), and although its existence is widely tolerated by the government, the organization continues not to be registered with the Ministry of Justice (*Trud* 5 Dec. 2000; *Obshchaya Gazeta* 11 Jan. 2001). In the interim, the organization has joined the Yuliya Tymoshenko bloc (RFE/RL 30 June 2003) and the electoral coalition named Rukh (Movement) (Interfax 9 July 2004).

### **UNA-UNSO Activities**

Regarding its activities, UNA-UNSO has participated in armed conflicts outside of the Ukraine, including in Abkhazia to assist the Georgians against Russian separatists, in Moldova against the pro-Romanians, in Yugoslavia to assist the Serbs against the Bosnians (UNA-UNSO n.d.c; see also ibid. n.d.b; RFE/RL 30 June 2003) and in Russia to assist Chechens against Russians (*FSU Monitor* 19 Jan. 2001). The meeting place for the organization's paramilitary forces is Bald Mountain in Kiev (ibid.; *Obshchaya Gazeta* 11 Jan. 2001). UNA-UNSO fighters wear camouflaged uniforms, are devoted Christians, are described as typically having sunken eyes and a short haircut, and use aliases "for the sake of beauty and conspiracy" (ibid.).

In early 2000, UNA-UNSO opened three information centres concerning Ichkeria Chechnya, one in Kiev, another in Odessa (BBC 16 Mar. 2000) and one in Lviv (AP 4 Apr. 2000; ITAR-TASS 3 Apr. 2000). These were opened despite opposition from Russian diplomats (BBC 16 Mar. 2000; AP 4 Apr. 2000).

Additional information on the activities of the UNA-UNSO could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. However, general information can be accessed at <[http://www.una-unso.org/av/main.asp?TT\\_id=17](http://www.una-unso.org/av/main.asp?TT_id=17)>.

### **Treatment of UNA-UNSO Members by the Ukrainian Authorities**

In July 1999, 17 UNA-UNSO members were detained and criminally

charged after the Ukrainian authorities seized 64 bottles of an explosive mixture that was to be used to prevent a religious procession that was planned by the Russian Orthodox Church (BBC 30 July 1999). Information on the outcome of these charges could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

In December 2000, Serhiy Mozhovyi, a UNA-UNSO member was killed after being run over simultaneously by two cars (Intelnews 27 Dec. 2000). Police officers reportedly prevented UNA-UNSO officials from speaking to the drivers of the two cars (ibid.).

On 9 March 2001, violence between protesters and authorities erupted in Kiev, resulting in the arrest of numerous participants (AFP 9 Mar. 2001; BBC 10 Mar. 2001; Interfax 10 Mar. 2001; UPI 22 May 2001). The police used tear gas against demonstrators who were throwing bottles and stones (*Los Angeles Times* 11 Mar. 2001). The protest was against Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma, for his alleged involvement in the killing of an investigative journalist (BBC 10 Mar. 2001). Five UNA-UNSO members who had been arrested were later released and stated that while at the police station they had been "treated 'within the limits of the law'" (Interfax 9 Mar. 2001). According to Agence France Presse (AFP), Ukrainian police officers also forced themselves into the headquarters of UNA-UNSO on the day of the protest clash, and arrested 150 organizational supporters, including women (AFP 9 Mar. 2001). Shkil was initially arrested on 9 March 2001, then released due to a lack of evidence, and then again arrested on 21 March 2001 for his involvement in the clash (Interfax 21 Mar. 2001; RFE/RL 22 Mar. 2001). Shkil was finally released on 12 April 2002 (*Kyiv Post* 18 Apr. 2002). However, at that time, 12 other UNA-UNSO members remained in jail awaiting a verdict and sentence, which was finally delivered in December 2002 by a Kiev district court that sentenced them to between two and five years' imprisonment (Interfax 26 Dec. 2002). Another four UNA-UNSO members received a two-year suspended sentence (ibid.). On 18 March 2003, Andry Kosenko was the first of the group to be released from jail after serving his sentence (Ukraine Public Radio Online 18 Mar. 2003). By December 2003, of those detained and imprisoned, only four remained in custody while the others had been released (*Country Reports 2003*, Sec. 2.b.).

*Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2003* reported that in April 2003,

...opposition UNA/UNSO prisoner Serhiy Halchyk, a deputy in the Rada, told the human rights Ombudsman that prison guards beat him with clubs and harassed him and other prisoners in the Lukianivska prison in Kiev where he was detained in 2002. He stated that guards deprived complaining prisoners of correspondence and food packages (ibid., Sec. 1.c).

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.

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