



UCCA WELCOMES ODWU AND CUSUR INTO ITS RANKS!

The Executive Board of the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA), the nation's largest representation of Ukrainians in America, is pleased to announce that the Organization for the Rebirth of Ukraine (ODWU) and the Center for US-Ukrainian Relations (CUSUR) now stand beside over 20 other national Ukrainian-American organizations as official members of UCCA's National Council.

As is stipulated in UCCA's Bylaws, the Membership Committee is authorized and required to review applications for membership. During the National Council's first meeting of 2018, the Chair of the Membership Committee, Marie Duplak, reported that two organizations applied for UCCA membership and the Committee recommends their approval. Thus, on June 9th the National Council unanimously approved and welcomed ODWU and CUSUR into the UCCA family.

The announcement by ODWU marks a welcome return to an organization that was a founding member of UCCA and has propagated Ukrainian nationalism and supported the liberation of Ukraine since the 1930s.

Since 2000, CUSUR has become the premier venue for gathering senior-level representatives of the political, economic, security and diplomatic establishments of the United States and Ukraine to exchange views on a wide range of issues. In an effort to improve the ties that make up the US-UA 'strategic partnership', many of CUSUR's annual events are co-organized and co-sponsored by UCCA.

UCCA continues its outreach to non-member Ukrainian-American organizations as mandated by its bylaws to "coordinate and consolidate the development of organized Ukrainian life in the United States of America." Every national or local Ukrainian organization, institution, committee, or club in the United States is invited to work as a ratified member organization within UCCA's National Council, and participate at the XXIII Congress of Ukrainians in America in 2020.

The UCCA Executive Board warmly welcomes ODWU and CUSUR into their ranks and looks forward to a fruitful relationship!

#FREESENTSOV: UCCA ISSUES LETTER & CALLS FOR HUNGER STRIKE

On June 1st, UCCA sent an urgent letter of appeal to President Trump and Congressional leaders imploring the United States to "take the lead in promoting international norms" and demand the immediate release of Ukrainian activist Oleh Sentsov and the over sixty other political prisoners currently imprisoned by Russia. Millions of Ukrainians around the world have united to give voice to those facing brutal repression in the areas of Ukraine currently illegally occupied by Russian forces – an occupation that has not only manifested itself in imprisonment, but in the all too common "disappearance" of those deemed to be "trouble-makers."

Russia currently imprisons over 60 Ukrainians abducted illegally from their homeland, including the award-winning filmmaker Oleh Sentsov. A native of Crimea, Sentsov is serving a 20-year prison sentence at a strict penal colony in the Siberian region of Yakutia following a 2015 show trial reminiscent of the Stalin-era. Beginning with his arrest in May 2014 soon after Russia illegally annexed the Crimean peninsula, Russia has illegally imprisoned dozens of Ukrainian citizens in occupied areas of Ukraine and Russia, including Oleksandr Kolchenko, Stanislav Klich, Oleksiy Chyrnyi, Roman Sushchenko, and many, many others.

As stated in UCCA's letter to the President, Speaker Ryan, and Leaders McConnell, Schumer and Pelosi, Sentsov has recently declared a courageous hunger strike to protest Russia's violations of internationally recognized human rights. In a letter provided to his lawyer, Sentsov stated that "the only condition for ending [the hunger strike] is the release of all Ukrainian political prisoners held by Russia."

UCCA calls for the United States to support these imprisoned Ukrainians by utilizing the Magnitsky Act and CAATSA, as passed by Congress in December 2012 and July 2017, respectively, and implement additional sanctions against Russian officials.

On June 13th, UCCA called upon the Ukrainian-American community, and our friends around the world, to express their solidarity with Oleh Sentsov by participating in a one-day hunger strike on the eve of the FIFA World Cup in Russia.

Since May 14, Sentsov has been on an indefinite hunger strike, stating that "the one and only condition for its termination is the release of all Ukrainian political prisoners that are currently present on the territory of the Russian Federation."

This act of political protest followed on UCCA's June 1 letter to President Trump and Congressional leaders calling attention to Mr. Sentsov, and the over 60 Ukrainian political prisoners who languish in Russian prisons.

UCCA RESPONDS: RUSSIA DOES NOT BELONG TO THE G7 SUMMIT

On June 8th, UCCA, issued a statement strongly denouncing the suggestion made by President Trump, in which he called for Russia to be reinstated into the group of the world's largest advanced economies: the G7. The statement read:

"...Although Russia had been previously included in the so-called G8 summits since 1997, the G7 rightly canceled a planned June 2014 summit in the Russian city of Sochi, following the first forced annexation Europe had seen since the Second World War. In canceling the planned summit, the G7 countries issued the Hague Declaration, which sternly rebuked Russia's actions in Ukraine: "International law prohibits the acquisition of part or all of another state's territory through coercion or force. To do so violates the principles upon which the international system is built. We condemn the illegal referendum held in Crimea in violation of Ukraine's constitution. We also strongly condemn Russia's illegal attempt to annex Crimea in contravention of international law and specific international obligations. We do not recognize either... Today, we reaffirm that Russia's actions will have significant consequences. This clear violation of international law is a serious challenge to the rule of law around the world and should be a concern for all nations."

Russia not only blatantly violated the UN Charter with its invasion of Ukrainian sovereign territory – and continues in daily violation by their ongoing military occupation – but also violated the Helsinki Final Act, the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, and at least 2 bilateral agreements between Russia and Ukraine.

UCCA calls for unity of the G7 nations in upholding the international norms of the post-World War II security order. Only through continued international pressure will the Russian Federation be persuaded to cease violating international law, and remove itself from all internationally recognized Ukrainian territory.

Until the Russian Federation ceases its actions in Ukraine, which contravene the principles and values on which the G7 operate, Russia must remain suspended from membership into the group of the world's largest advanced economies."

UCCA CO-SPONSORS REPORT CARD CONFERENCE

On June 14th, UCCA co-sponsored the *US-UA Working Group Yearly Summit VI: Providing Ukraine with an Annual Report Card*, which took place at the University Club in Washington, D.C. The day-long forum brought together government and key non-government representatives from Ukraine, Canada, the EU and the US to take measure of Ukraine's 2017-2018 progress/regress in six categories: "robust democratic politics, developed market economics, viable social cohesion, ever greater energy security, ever greater general security and an established national identity".

To view the conference proceedings, please visit

<https://www.facebook.com/pg/UCCA.org/videos/>

A more detailed written account of the conference will be published in the Ukrainian American press.

27TH ANNIVERSARY OF UKRAINE'S RENEWED INDEPENDENCE



On this 27th Anniversary of Ukraine's renewed Independence, the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA), sends its warmest greetings and salutations to Ukrainians throughout the world.

May the Lord bless the Ukrainian people and grant them the wisdom and fortitude to secure their sovereignty and restore their territorial integrity during this difficult time for our homeland. Slava Ukraini!

UCCA MOURNS THE PASSING OF IVAN DRACH

The Ukrainian Congress Committee of America with great sadness learned about the death of the Ukrainian poet and public figure Ivan Drach, on June 19, 2018.

The founder the People's Movement of Ukraine, Ivan Drach, faithfully and truly served his country as a true patriot of Ukraine. The disappearance of his voice and the brilliant talent of writing is a great loss not only for the people of Ukraine, but for the entire world Ukrainian community.

Vichnaya Pamyiat!