



FIRST "UKRAINIAN DAYS" OF 2016 CONCLUDES SUCCESSFULLY

On April 19th, UNIS organized the first "Ukrainian Days" of 2016 to advocate greater U.S. support for Ukraine to deter Russia's invasion, increase economic reform efforts, and mitigate the increased need for humanitarian relief. The intent of "Ukrainian Days" was to promote the Ukrainian community's concerns about assistance to Ukraine, as well as to establish better contacts with elected representatives in Washington.

Nearly two dozen community activists from across the U.S. participated in the event, which began with a briefing session. An analysis of current U.S.-Ukraine relations was presented by former U.S. ambassador to Ukraine, Roman Popadiuk. Additional speakers included His Eminence Yevstratiy, Archbishop of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church – Kyiv Patriarchate, who provided his perspective of the current social fabric of Ukraine; and, Sohaib Alagha, Vice President of the Syrian American Coalition who informed the "Ukrainian Day" participants about Russia's destructive role in the Syrian civil war.

During the day, community representatives split into groups and held meetings with their various congressional and senatorial offices, among them: Rep. B. Pascrell (D-NJ); Sen. K. Gillibrand (D-NY); Sen. C. Schumer (D-NY); Sen. R. Menendez (D-NJ); Sen. C. Booker (D-NJ); Rep. P. Tonko (D-NY); Rep. C. Maloney (D-NY); Rep. C. Dent (R-PA); Rep. B. Boyle (D-PA); Rep. M. Fitzpatrick (R-PA), co-chair of the CUC; Rep. M. Cartwright (D-PA); Rep. R. Costello (R-PA); Rep. P. Meehan (R-PA); Sen. P. Toomey (R-PA); and, Sen. B. Casey (D-PA). During the meetings, Members of Congress were presented with various policy papers, including a complete list of newly-introduced bills and resolutions in support of Ukraine.



The successful advocacy event was bolstered by an afternoon policy forum sponsored by the Central and East European Coalition (CEEC), a group that includes 18 national ethnic organizations, representing nearly 22 million Americans of Central and East European descent. The UCCA was a founding member of the CEEC in 1994. Entitled "NATO Stance on Russia," the policy forum featured a discussion about NATO and its response to current Russian aggression in the region. The policy forum included keynote speaker Dr. Michael Carpenter, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense and panelists Amb. Kurt Volker, McCain Institute, former U.S. Permanent Representative to NATO; Mindaugas Zickus, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Lithuania; and, Damian Murphy, U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Over 100 congressional staffers, policy think-tank analysts and community activists participated in the event.

30TH ANNIVERSARY OF CHORNOBYL MARKED AT THE UN

On the morning of April 26th the United Nations General Assembly held a commemorative meeting to observe the 30th anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster. During his remarks, Ukraine's Ambassador to the UN, Volodymyr Yelchenko compared the tragedy of Chernobyl to Russia's current aggression in Ukraine.



Amb. Yelchenko at the UN General Assembly.

At 1pm, in cooperation with the UCCA, the Ukrainian Mission to the United Nations, under the leadership of Ambassador Volodymyr Yelchenko, opened a special photo exhibit dedicated to the 30th anniversary of the Chernobyl catastrophe.



UCCA Board and members with Amb. Yelchenko.

The Chernobyl Exhibit will be on display until Friday, April 29th, in the United Nations Secretariat Building.

UCCA ISSUES STATEMENT ON THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF CHORNOBYL

On April 26th, the UCCA issued a statement on the 30th anniversary of Chernobyl, which reads in part:

“Thirty years ago today, the worst nuclear disaster in history occurred at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant, causing irreparable harm and tragic human, natural and economic losses to Ukraine and its people.

On the night of Saturday, April 26, 1986, an act of unforgivable negligence at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in Northern Ukraine resulted in disaster. An explosion at the plant blew the concrete roof off Reactor #4 sending large amounts of toxic radioactivity billowing into the atmosphere. This was not simply an industrial accident, but the unimaginable result of carelessness and disregard on the part of Soviet authorities that led to human tragedy on a massive scale. Cognizant of their error, the regime did the unthinkable. It imperiled millions of lives by remaining silent and refusing to admit that anything out of the ordinary had happened! It wasn't until Swedish diplomats, having detected abnormal amounts of radioactivity within their own country, gave notice on Monday, April 28th of their impending desire to file an official alert with the International Atomic Energy Agency, that Moscow finally issued this brief five-sentence statement...

In the meantime, the people of Ukraine were completely left in the dark due to the Soviet authorities' silence and failure to take the proper precautions to secure the safety of their citizens. Evacuations from the immediate area surrounding Chernobyl were not even initiated by the authorities until 36 hours following the explosion. Moreover, five days after the catastrophe, in Ukraine's capital Kyiv, a mere 60 miles south of Chernobyl, thousands of unsuspecting citizens paraded in the streets in celebration of May Day, oblivious to the invisible danger that had already infiltrated their city.

The result of this tragedy is not only startling, but long lasting. Although there were those who died immediately from exposure to high levels of radiation, we must not forget the on-going effects that continue to plague Ukraine today: the alarming increase in birth defects and infant mortality, the extremely high rate of thyroid and other cancers and the countless other side effects that will plague Ukraine for centuries to come.

Ukraine inherited from the totalitarian communist regime the grim and lasting legacy of this nuclear catastrophe, whose destructive power transcended all borders. The efforts to deal with the aftermath of Chernobyl and the far-reaching effects of the disaster exceed the abilities of any one country - it needs the cooperation of the entire international community. Therefore, the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America, on this 30th anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear catastrophe, reaffirms its resolve to ensure that the ongoing needs of the victims in Ukraine are not forgotten and calls on the international community to join together to address the consequences of the Chernobyl catastrophe, by providing the moral and financial support needed to assist the affected communities and ease the continued suffering of the countless victims in the wake of this tragedy.

On this 30th anniversary the UCCA also honors those who perished and those who survived this catastrophe. We remember the hundreds of emergency workers who responded to the catastrophe; the hundreds of thousands who were uprooted from their homes; and the millions who suffered and continue to suffer from health issues related to Chernobyl.”

XXII CONGRESS OF UKRAINIANS IN AMERICA

On September 23-25, the UCCA will be holding its quadrennial congress in Hartford, CT. To prepare for the upcoming Congress of Ukrainians Americans, please find some reminders:

DELEGATE PACKETS have been sent to our member organizations and branches. Should you like a packet, please contact the UCCA National Office.

HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS have been made at Hampton Inn, 20 Waterchase Drive, Rocky Hill, CT. Please call **860-563-7877** - using the code UCA - to reserve your discounted room [\$125.35 (includes tax)/per night for a room with 2 double beds]. Breakfast (6AM-10AM) is included in the room rate. Reservations must be made by August 23rd.

ADS/GREETINGS

The deadline for ads and/or greetings for the UCCA's Convention Book is June 30, 2016.

UNF

To participate in the upcoming Convention, your Ukrainian National Fund (UNF) dues must be paid through 2016

UCCA NYC BRANCH PRESIDENT HONORED

On April 26th the UCCA held a special reception to honor Ivanka Zajac, UCCA NYC Branch President, who was bestowed the prestigious “Order of St. Barbara” award given by His Holiness Patriarch of Kyiv and All Rus Ukraine, Filaret.



Ivanka was also bestowed the "Strong Spirit" Award and an award from the 59th Brigade for all of her work on behalf of the defenders of Ukraine. The UCCA congratulates Ivanka and thanks her for all of her hard work to assist our freedom fighters in Ukraine! Slava Ukrainy!