

UCCA DECLARES UKRAINE'S PRESIDENTIAL RUN-OFF ELECTION FREE, FAIR AND DEMOCRATIC

Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA), the largest representative organization of Americans of Ukrainian descent, is one of the few NGOs and the only Ukrainian American organization registered with Ukraine's Central Election Commission.

As a reminder for all, the presidential election was held with the backdrop of continuous challenges to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Because of the ongoing armed conflict in Donbas, and the illegal annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation, the election could not be held in Crimea and certain parts of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts that are not under the control of the Ukrainian government. That being said, UCCA thanks the Ukrainian government and its authorities for making every effort to enable the disenfranchised voters to cast their ballots and make their voices heard.

The UCCA EOM noted very few irregularities. Those that were reported were not systemic in nature nor did they impact the results of the election. A concern raised by some observers stated that polling stations were located on 2nd and 3rd floors making it difficult for older and handicapped voters to access the polling station. The 88 officially registered UCCA International Election Observers, for both rounds of the Presidential Elections, reported that the voting process was conducted in a peaceful, transparent and democratic manner. UCCA affirms that the April 21st run-off election met international standards for free and fair elections that accurately reflects the will of the Ukrainian electorate. In fact, they may have been the best run elections since Ukraine's renewal of Independence in 1991.

Throughout the day, UCCA's EOM, working in concert with the Ukrainian World Congress, reported that the voting process was being conducted in a peaceful, transparent and democratic manner. In fact, with reports from our observers, the short-term observation teams reported 97% of precincts performed with a rating of 'good' or 'very good' - a high standard of performance for any election cycle.

The UCCA stands with the people of Ukraine in their desire for a united and democratic country and wishes the newly elected President strength in normalizing and stabilizing the situation in Ukraine for the furtherance of democracy. We stand together with the Ukrainian people in their desire for continued reforms, including, first and foremost, an end to endemic corruption, which will ensure the further development of Ukraine's economy, democratic institutions, Eurointegration and NATO membership.

And lastly, the UCCA expresses its sincere gratitude to its delegation, who volunteered their time and money to participate as International election observers – their commitment to democracy must be commended.



L to R: UCCA pre-election briefing; UCCA Post-Election Debriefing

US AMBASSADOR MARIE YOVANOVITCH THANKS UCCA

On April 19th the US Embassy in Ukraine tweeted the following:

Ambassador Yovanovitch warmly welcomed the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America delegation that will observe the final round of Ukraine's presidential election. We appreciate the dedication and commitment of UCCA volunteers during both rounds of the presidential election to supporting Ukrainian democracy.

UCCA CONGRATULATES UKRAINE'S PRESIDENT ELECT

The Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA), an organization representing the interests of Ukrainians in the United States since 1940, sincerely congratulates you, Mr. Zelensky, on your victory in a truly historic presidential election. The Ukrainian people made their democratic choice for you to serve in the highest office of the land. As Head of State, you carry the highest responsibility to govern and continue the development of an independent, sovereign and democratic Ukraine.

UCCA, the largest representative body of over 1.5 million Americans of Ukrainian descent, appealed to every Ukrainian to exercise their civic duty and cast their ballot during the run-off elections as UCCA believes that voters play an important role in shaping their government, and in turn their very future. Ukraine has proven to the world that it is a true democracy that conducts free and fair elections as UCCA's Election Observation Mission noted following the presidential elections.

Mr. President-elect, the Ukrainian community in the United States will always work to ensure that Ukraine becomes a strong, democratic state firmly rooted within the EuroAtlantic community. We reaffirm that UCCA is staunchly committed to our long-standing principles and will continue to advocate for:

- Maintaining a strong Ukrainian army capable of deterring foreign aggressors;
- Maintaining the territorial integrity of Ukraine, including the return of territories occupied by Russian forces;
- Charting a course of further integration into the Euro-Atlantic structure - including NATO and the European Union;
- Strengthening the market-orientated economy;
- Continuing the fight against corruption;
- Adoption of the Ukrainian language as the official state language of Ukraine; and,
- The final separation of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine from the Church of the aggressor.

UCCA remains committed to protecting the interests of the Ukrainian people, and will continue to do so to ensure the prosperity of our ancestors' land, so that the world respects Ukraine as an equal among equals in the community of democratic nations.

The Ukrainian Congress Committee of America invites you, as the newly elected President of Ukraine, to meet with our Ukrainian-American community at the earliest opportunity during your visit to the United States, in order to further extend our cooperation to the well-being of our common homeland.

2019 UKRAINIAN NATIONAL FUND

For 75 years the Ukrainian National Fund (UNF) has served as UCCA's main financial basis of all its activities. In 1949 at the IV Congress of UCCA, the UNF was established as a financial basis of the UCCA, so that it could conduct its operations independent of outside influences, for the benefit of our community and the cause of Ukraine's freedom and independence. Thanks to the generous support of our members, UNF has served as our bulwark in support of our efforts.

During this 5th year of ongoing Russian aggression against Ukraine and its illegal occupation of Crimea, UCCA vows to continue its efforts on behalf of the Ukrainian people to maintain (and strengthen) their sovereignty and territorial integrity and to step up its efforts to address the continuing national security threats Russia poses not just to Ukraine, but to the entire EuroAtlantic security framework.

In an effort to address these and many other issues, 2019 promises to be a very busy year for UCCA.

UCCA is planning many events to continue enlisting the support of the United States for Ukraine.

UCCA will host multiple Election Observation Missions to support Ukraine's democratic development.

UCCA will mark important events within the life of our vibrant Ukrainian community and the Ukrainian nation;

UCCA will continue its efforts to unify and revitalize our community.

The success of this organization, and thereby, the success of the Ukrainian American community to protect its interests and voice its opinions has always been and will continue to be in the hands of its dedicated and patriotic membership and friends. You can be confident that your generous donation will go directly to supporting the services and programs that fulfill the UCCA's mission.

*Please help us realize these noble and patriotic goals by donating generously to the UNF. **Thank you!***

REMEMBERING CHORNOBYL

On the 33rd commemoration of the worst nuclear disaster in history, the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA), the largest representation of Ukrainians in America, honors those who perished and those who survived this senseless tragedy. Although there were those who died immediately from exposure to high levels of radiation, we also recognize the after-effects that continue to plague areas of Ukraine today: increased rates of 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. UCCA reaffirms its resolve to ensure that the ongoing needs of the victims of this tragedy in Ukraine are not forgotten.

On this solemn anniversary, let us never forget this crime against humanity that forever changed Ukraine and the world.