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The Hon. Vladimir Putin
President of the Russian Federation
The Kremlin, Moscow
Russian Federation

Honourable President Putin,

We are writing to you on behalf of the Ukrainian World Congress (UWC), an international non-governmental coordinating body of Ukrainian communities throughout the world. Our purpose is to promote and preserve the identity, language, culture and spiritual development of Ukrainian communities in all countries and to monitor and protect their human and civil rights. The Union of Ukrainians of Russia (UUR) has been a member organization of the UWC for over 10 years.

We are troubled that, over the past four years, there have been a number of killings of prominent members of the Ukrainian minority in Russia, all of them members of the UUR. Specifically, Volodymyr Poburinnyi, the deputy-head of the Society of Ukrainian Culture "Mriya" was killed in Ivanovo in November 2002. In April 2004, A. Kryl, a medical doctor, director of the "Horlytsia" Ukrainian choir and member of the registration group of the St. Nicholas parish of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church – Kyiv Patriarchate, was killed in Vladivostok. In December 2006, V. Senyshyn, the co-chair of the Ukrainian organization "Bat'kivska Strikha" was killed in Tula. A few months earlier, in July 2006, an attempt had been made on the life of Natalia Kovaliova, V. Senyshyn's wife, co-chair of the "Bat'kivska Strikha" organization in Tula and member of the Auditing Committee of the Federal National-Cultural Autonomy "Ukrainians of Russia". N. Kovaliova survived due to a seven-hour neurosurgical operation and a lengthy period of recuperation.

It appears that these attacks are aimed at spreading fear among the Ukrainian regional communities in Russia through physical assaults on its leading members, particularly those that participate in religious or journalistic activity and those that are active in Ukrainian organizations. Naturally, we are gravely concerned. The UWC represents Ukrainian communities in 31 countries. Of these, Russia is the only one in which there have been assaults and killings of leading members of the community. We are particularly concerned that none of these criminal cases has been solved and not a single perpetrator brought to justice. Alarming, in the case of A. Kryl the procuracy delayed excessively in opening this case and shortly thereafter closed it with no arrests.

The UWC's Commission on Human and Civil Rights has written to you three times over the last year concerning the killing of Ukrainian community leaders in the RF, but has not received a reply. This raised our concern that, perhaps, authorities in Russia are not making sufficient efforts to protect Russian citizens of Ukrainian nationality. Therefore, we appeal to you to strengthen measures aimed at preventing killings and attacks on members of the Ukrainian minority in Russia. In particular, we request that you make arrangements to secure the personal safety of

Natalia Kovaliova since neither her assailant nor her husband's killer has been apprehended to date. At the same time, we urge you to ensure that the subject cases be thoroughly investigated and those responsible be brought to justice

We wish you success in your service for the good of all peoples of the Russian Federation. Kindly keep us informed of your efforts and results in the subject matters.

Sincerely yours,



Askold S. Lozynskyj
President
Ukrainian World Congress

Toronto-New York



Jurij Darewych
Chair, Commission on
Human and Civil Rights

23 March 2007

Copies:

Council of Europe
Directorate General of Human Rights - DG II
Secretariat of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

Javier Solana, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union

Rolf Ekeus, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities

Louise Arbour, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine

Attachments:

- 1) Letter of 29 X 2004 to Pres. V. Putin regarding the killing of A. Kryl
- 2) Letter of 25 IX 2006 to Pres. V. Putin regarding the killing of A. Kryl
- 3) Letter of 10 XI 2006 to Pres. V. Putin regarding the assault on N. Kovaliova
- 4) Article by V. Senyshyn "About the attempt on the life of Natalia Kovaliova" (in Russian)
- 5) Article by V. Kolomatsky and S. Paniak "About a series of attempts on the life of leaders of Ukrainian community and religious organizations in the Russian Federation" (in Ukrainian).