



Комісія Людських та Громадянських Прав – Commission on Human and Civil Rights

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

October 30, 2006

Honourable President Putin,

A few weeks ago we had written to you regarding the unresolved matter of the killing in April, 2004 in Vladivostok of the medical doctor and active member of the Ukrainian community, Anatolij Kryl'. Today we have the sad duty to write to you regarding another attack on a prominent member of the Ukrainian community in the Russian Federation.

Our Commission has obtained information about an attempt on the life of M-me Natalia Kovaliova, the deputy head of the community organization *Bat'kivs'ka Strikha* in the Tula Oblast and of the Tula branch of the Union of Ukrainians in Russia, as well as member of the Auditing Commission of the Federal National Cultural Autonomy "Ukrainians of Russia".

As far as we have been able to ascertain, at 10:00 a.m. on July 19, 2006 M-me Natalia Kovaliova was accosted in the stairway leading to the office of the COBZA company, of which she and her husband, Volodymyr Senyshyn are owners. The attack on M-me Kovaliova resulted in a cracked skull, serious damage to her face, severe trauma of the right eye, broken teeth, bleeding in the brain and loss of skin cover at the back of her head. It appears that the attack was carried out with the use of a metal rod that was found near the office.

During the time of the assault, M-me Natalia Kovaliova had three suitcases of documents with her, which were left undamaged at the location of the attack.

As a result of the attack, M-me Kovaliova had to undergo a serious seven hour-long neurosurgical operation. She had to spend the next three days in the intensive care unit. According to the doctors, it is a miracle that she has remained alive. At this time, the victim has to undergo a lengthy period of rehabilitation and convalescence, and has to spend most of her time in the hospital. The prognosis of the doctors is that the complete rehabilitation of just the eye will require from one to three years.

According to the victim, as well as according to her husband (who is also the chairman of the Ukrainian organization *Bat'kivs'ka Strikha*) the attack may be connected with her community activities. As Mr. V. Senyshyn puts it "the militia's efforts in this case have been feeble".

Our Commission is very concerned by this attempt upon the life of one of the leading members of the Ukrainian movement in Russia. This is the third life-threatening attack upon Ukrainian activists in Russia: In January, 1998 an attempt was made on the life of Archbishop Adrian (Starina) of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate, an attack which the militia did not investigate; in April, 2004 the medical doctor Anatolij Kryl', one of the 20 members of the registration group of the Vladivostok Parish of the Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate was killed, and the case has remained unsolved, despite

the promises of the General Procuracy of the Russian Federation. We are troubled by the fact that the law-enforcement authorities seem not to take the investigations of these matters seriously. We fear that this may be an indication of an attitude of prejudice and discrimination towards the Ukrainian minority in Russia.

We ask you to do everything in your power to ensure that the perpetrators of the heinous attempt to kill Natalia Kovaliova are brought to justice, so that the Ukrainian community in Russia may feel that the authorities in Russia are able and willing to protect their lawful rights.

We wish you success in your service for the good of all peoples of the Russian Federation.

Sincerely yours,

Jurij Darewych
Chair of the Commission

Vasyl Kolomatsky
Chair of the Commission's Committee on the Ukrainian minority in Russia

cc: OSCE High Commission on National Minorities
Council of Europe, Secretariat of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities
United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine

Attached: Internet publication by V. Senyshyn