

Ukraine in Brief

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Ukrainian Presidents Honor Victims of the Holodomor



*Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich (L) is joined by former presidents Yushchenko, Kravchuk, and Kuchma.
(Photo: www.president.gov.ua)*

On November 26th, the first four presidents of Ukraine joined in honoring the millions of Ukrainians who died in the Holodomor. The Holodomor was a Soviet-induced famine-genocide in Ukraine during the 1932-33 which killed over seven million Ukrainians. Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich and former presidents Viktor Yushchenko (2005-2010), Leonid Kuchma (1994-2005), and Leonid Kravchuk (1991-1994) took part in the ceremony, which honored the victims with a minute of silence, at the Bykivnia Graves National Historical Memorial Complex in Bykivnia, outside of Kyiv.

Former President Yushchenko, in particular, has been a very vocal champion for the international recognition of the Holodomor as genocide against Ukrainians. It was one of his major focuses during his term as President.

On his website, President Yanukovich wrote that the Holodomor was “an unprecedented global tragedy has caused

irreparable damage to Ukraine. The terrible years of totalitarianism have also become a spiritual disaster: many temples were destroyed, hundreds of thousands of peasants, workers and intellectuals were physically destroyed and sent to [concentration] camps, and almost all Ukrainian families suffered.” He continued by saying: “Keeping the memory of the tragic events of our past, the Ukrainian state is steadily moving forward, developing civil society on the principles of human rights and freedoms and laying a solid foundation for future generations.”

Vitali Klitschko Meets with EU Commissioner

Ukrainian heavy weight champion boxer and UDAR Party leader Vitali Klitschko met with Stefan Fule, the EU Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighborhood Policy. After the November 25th meeting held in Brussels, Fule praised Klitschko’s efforts to unite Ukrainians around European values. Klitschko has been involved in fighting against corruption at the municipal levels as well as pushing for Ukrainians to adopt values such as democracy and economic freedom.

Fule reiterated that while the EU is committed to completing the association agreement with Ukraine and deepening relations, the EU is still very concerned that the “rule of law is not being applied systematically in Ukraine” and that “procedural flaws in the ongoing trails of opposition members were the symptoms of politically motivated justice and undermine the basic European values.”

UDAR (Ukrainian Democratic Alliance for Reform) is the political party founded by Vitali Klitschko in April of 2010.

US Pushing Investment in Sevastopol

The American Chamber of Commerce in Ukraine hopes to promote investment in the Crimean city of Sevastopol. Sevastopol is also the location of the Russian Black Sea Fleet. The chamber’s president Jorge Zukoski hopes “to help Sevastopol expand its opportunities in port development and tourism infrastructure. One of the main conditions for investment projects to be implemented is the presence of the respective legislative framework, as well as good close relations with the leaders of the region” and that the chamber was working in cooperation with the regional leadership. Zukoski had met with the head of the Sevastopol City State Administration Volodymyr Yatsuba who told reporters that “The law on the investment attractiveness of Crimea is already in the Ukrainian parliament, and it has already passed all of the procedures. Sevastopol must ensure that this law covers the investment activities of the entire peninsula.”

According to Yatsuba a U.S. firm was already working on a large-scale survey, studies, and project work on Belbek Airport which is near Sevastopol and that other companies are studying the port industry of Sevastopol and without the expertise of the American Chamber of Commerce “it’s impossible to talk about the investment attractiveness of our region.”