

**INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL IN SUPPORT OF UKRAINE
РАДА УКРАЇНСЬКИХ ДЕРЖАВНИЦЬКИХ ОРГАНІЗАЦІЙ СВІТУ
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DE SOUTIEN DE L'UKRAINE**

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**International Council in Support of Ukraine (ICSU)
Condemns Introduction of New Anti-Protest Law in Ukraine**

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TORONTO- KYIV: The International Council in Support of Ukraine (ICSU), an international coordinating body for long-standing national networks of NGOs established by the Ukrainian diaspora in North America, Europe, South America, and Australia, has condemned the introduction of a new anti-protest law passed by Ukraine's Parliament in gross violation of its own rules of procedure.

The new measures and regulations were pushed through Parliament by Ukraine's ruling party, with no debate or referral to an appropriate committee, and using a show of hands, rather than electronic counting, violating proper procedures.

The extreme measures include:

- the ability of the ruling-party majority in parliament to strip deputies of immunity without pre-approval by a special parliamentary committee, making opposition MPs subject to criminal prosecution;
- provisions re-criminalizing criticism of public officials as defamation, crippling the ability of investigative journalists to report on corruption and criminal activities on the part of government officials and police;
- arbitrary police powers to jail, fine and prosecute without warrant persons and organizations deemed to be providing facilities or equipment for unauthorized meetings;
- criminal responsibility for distributing, through the media and the Internet, so-called "extremist materials", which are broadly defined in the law.

"These are Putin-style draconian measures that harken back to Soviet-era laws aimed at cracking down on Ukraine's peaceful pro-European protestors, who continue to gather in Kyiv and other cities in Ukraine by the tens of thousands to demand the resignation of a government that has lost all credibility," said Yuri Shymko, a former Canadian MP and current President of the International Council in Support of Ukraine (ICSU).

The ICSU believes that these new measures restrict the right to peacefully protest and exercise freedom of speech, constrain independent media, and inhibit the operation of NGOs. *"Ukraine is too strategically important to Europe's stability and security to have it slide into authoritarianism. The international community must stand up to the Yanukovich-Putin coalition, in defense of the Ukrainian people and their pursuit of a democratic and transparent government,"* said Mr. Shymko.

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