MEDIA RELEASE

PROTESTORS KILLED IN KYIV – AUSTRALIA TO SPEAK OUT IN DAVOS

The Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations (AFUO) condemns State-sanctioned violence by the regime of President Yanukovych against the Ukrainian people which has now resulted in at least 3 fatalities, and calls on the Australian Government to speak out at the G20 meeting in Davos.

In the last 48 hours, two Ukrainians were killed by police bullets and a third was killed after being beaten by riot police and 'falling from a high place'. (Warning: the attached video shows the graphic beating of protesters by the regime's Berkut special forces http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iaC_9ImEGfQ)

"Australia cannot stand silent as pro-democracy protestors and independent journalists are beaten and killed in Kyiv. By removing civil rights and by allowing Berkut to use deadly force, Mr Yanukovych has become a dictator who is to blame for this escalation," Mr Stefan Romaniw OAM, President of the AFUO, said.

"As events have rapidly unfolded in Ukraine, Australia has only made one statement on the situation – in December. Meanwhile, allies such as the US, Canada and the EC have started to introduce personal financial sanctions and international travel restrictions on the Yanukovych regime and those responsible for human rights abuses in Ukraine.

"We ask the Prime Minister to use his authority as chair of the G20 and raise this matter with his international colleagues while in Davos," Mr Romaniw said.

"We call on the Australian Government to take decisive action to protest human rights abuses and the use of deadly force in Ukraine, including high-level diplomatic protests and instigating sanctions to kerb the regime's actions.

The AFUO requests all Australians to contact the Prime Minister Tony Abbott, Foreign Minister Julie Bishop and their Federal Members of Parliament to demand action by Australia to stop the bloodshed in Ukraine.

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