



УКРАЇНСЬКА ПРАВОСЛАВНА ЦЕРКВА В КАНАДІ
UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF CANADA
L'ÉGLISE ORTHODOXE UKRAINIENNE DU CANADA

9 St. John's Avenue Winnipeg, MB R2W 1G8
Tel. (204) 586-3093 (204) 582-8709 Fax. (204) 582-5241
e-mail: consistory@uocc.ca website: www.uocc.ca

March 9, 2016

Statement
Episcopate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada
in Support of Nadiya Savchenko

Reverend clergy and beloved faithful of the UOCC,

Glory to Jesus Christ!

March 9, 2016 has been named the Global Day #FreeSavchenko in support of Nadiya Savchenko, a senior lieutenant in the Ukrainian military. This global action calls on the Russian authorities to free Nadiya Savchenko, who has been illegally imprisoned there since June 2014 and later put on trial in Russia on falsified charges. March 9 marks the conclusion of Nadiya's trial in a flawed Russian court process that saw numerous human rights violations and irregularities. Many democratic governments and institutions have condemned the charges and court proceedings as politically motivated. It is symbolic that this date coincides with the birth date of Ukrainian national poet Taras Shevchenko whose writings highlighted Ukraine's struggle for independence and freedom.

In Spring 2014 following the annexation of Crimea and the invasion of Eastern Ukraine, Nadiya, like many patriotic Ukrainians, had joined a voluntary battalion to battle the Russian-supported terrorists. She was captured as a prisoner of war on June 17, 2014 and illegally transported to Russia. In Fall 2014 she was elected to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine and was chosen as one of Ukraine's parliamentary representatives to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

Last year, Nadiya went on a hunger strike lasting over three months to protest her illegal detention and to raise awareness. On March 4, 2016 she began another hunger strike – abstaining completely from food and water – to protest her incarceration in Russia. With her actions, Nadiya strongly wishes to convey to the world that Ukraine's aggressor is a dictatorial totalitarian regime with little respect for human dignity, rights and freedoms, and has contempt for international law.

Canada has a reputation in the world as a defender of human rights and civil society that emerge from the fundamental Christian values of respect for life and human dignity. We support the Canadian Government's appeal to the Russian authorities for Nadiya's immediate release. We further appeal to our Canadian officials along with international human rights organizations to take

all possible measures it can to secure Nadiya Savchenko's freedom. We also wish to draw the attention of our fellow Canadians to Nadiya's plight and why it has relevance for each one of us here far-away in Canada. As a country founded on democratic principles and championing human dignity, we cannot be bystanders in the world while other countries perpetrate gross abuses and violations against their citizens, neighbours and greater humanity. To turn a blind eye and to be indifferent is to become complicit in these very wrongdoings.

Nadiya Savchenko is one of Ukraine's new political prisoners. Her powerful will and courage in the face of brazen injustice has made her a symbol of hope for Ukraine. She also has become a beacon of light for the world by challenging flagrant violations of international human rights from behind bars and exposing a political regime that has so little regard for human life. Her bravery, strength and dignity under physical duress and psychological intimidation prove inspiring to her fellow Ukrainians and to the oppressed around the world.

Therefore, we call on clergy and faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada to join our brethren in Ukraine and around the world to pray for the well-being and protection of Nadiya Savchenko during the Divine Liturgy and in personal prayers. We also ask you to pray for the well-being and protection of Nadiya's family, her mother Maria and sister Vira, who tirelessly advocate for Nadiya's freedom and fear for her life.

In the Divine Liturgy in parishes of the UOCC, we bless the additional petition to the Litany of Fervent Supplication:

“Again we pray for the freedom, mercy, health, and salvation of all of Your servants, our brothers and sisters illegally imprisoned, held hostage and who unjustly languish in captivity in Russia, in Crimea and in the Donbas of Ukraine, O Christ our God, Who liberates the weak from attacks and rescues the destitute, hear us and have mercy.”

For you are the King of Peace and the Saviour of Souls and to You we send up glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

With Hierarchical Blessing,

† *YURIJ, Metropolitan*

† *ILARION, Bishop*

† *ANDRIY, Bishop*