



КОНГРЕС УКРАЇНЦІВ КАНАДИ

UKRAINIAN CANADIAN CONGRESS

CONGRÈS DES UKRAINIEN-CANADIENS

NATIONAL HOLODOMOR EDUCATION COMMITTEE

NEWS RELEASE

**Media Contact:** Orest Zakydalsky, UCC National Office

**Phone:** 613-232-8822

**email:** [ucc@ucc.ca](mailto:ucc@ucc.ca)

**National Holodomor Education Committee participates in ‘incorporating genocide education**

Ukrainian Canadian Congress actively participated in helping to incorporate genocide education as compulsory learning throughout Toronto District School Board high schools. NHEC Chair Valentina Kuryliw submitted a brief supporting the motion written by TDSB Trustees to the Ontario Ministry of Education. As part of the motion, TDSB Chair of the Board Robin Pilkey will recommend to the Minister of Education that

- a) That the Grade 11 *Genocide: Historical and Contemporary Implications*, be accredited as part of the Ontario Curriculum as a “university” or “mixed” course.
- b) That genocide examples are a comprehensive study as part of the mandatory Canadian History Since World War I Grade 10 course; and,
- c) That the province convene a working group of experts to look critically at the Ontario curriculum to ensure that students graduate with a better understanding of human rights, and how to protect those rights and take effective action if they or others experience hate, racism or others forms of discrimination and violence.

The motion, which was passed unanimously by the Board on 19 June, is also supported by a number of organizations including the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, Project Abraham, the National Holodomor Education Committee, Liberation75 and the Armenian National Committee.

Kuryliw’s brief discussed the importance of the Holodomor and the inclusion of genocides like the Holodomor in the teaching of human rights and genocide in that course and other courses of study in the Ontario curriculum. Her brief is attached to this press release.

###



National Holodomor Education Committee  
of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress/  
the Holodomor Research and Education  
Consortium



June 4, 2020

Committee of the Whole  
Toronto District School Board

The Ukrainian Holodomor (1932-33) is a unique example of genocide by famine which occurred, not during a time of war, but *during a time of peace*, carried out and concealed under Communist rule. It is a genocide that was denied, covered up as fake news and ignored for over 50 years. As a result, it is little known today and yet its legacy continues in current international affairs. Death inflicted by starvation is just one method used to destroy masses of people.

Since the Holodomor, food has been used as a weapon by other imperial and authoritarian states and thus the Holodomor serves as a useful case study of how governments methodically create the conditions for targeting and dehumanizing groups, permitting genocide to occur through an escalation of human rights abuses and legislation passed by authorities. By studying the Holodomor and other genocides we are teaching students to recognize and analyze the steps by which genocides develop and are escalated by authorities, and to thus become proactive global citizens who can prevent them from reoccurring. Genocide education and understanding the mechanisms of genocide, complements the study of human rights and Canadian values, the understanding of issues of equity, oppression, racism, hate and discrimination faced by any group that can be targeted at any time in history in any society.

Every day, as democratic and socially responsible citizens, we are called upon to respond to injustices occurring around us. These injustices could include bullying, hate crimes and acts of intolerance. Genocide education teaches critical thinking in identifying acts of human rights abuse and gives students the tools by which they can do something to involve themselves in proactive interventions and resolutions in their local communities and schools. Otherwise, the dehumanization of one man can lead to the destruction of a nation if not stopped by the actions of the global community. As Kofi Annan, the seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations stated, "A genocide begins with the killing of one man—not for what he has done, but because of who he is."

Although we recommend a course on Genocide should be offered to all high school students in Ontario as one of the courses that can be selected by students to meet

the Social Studies requirement, it is also important that all students learn about the importance of human rights and their abuses leading to genocide. This should be a unit in the Grade 10 Canadian History course that is compulsory for all Ontario high school students. These concepts should also be included with examples of abuse and genocide in Social Studies courses such as politics, law, social justice, world issues, equity studies, world religions, media studies, literature.

The escalation of human rights abuses which lead to genocide may be studied by examining a variety of specific genocides, such as the Holodomor and other genocides recognized by the Canadian government.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Valentina Kuryliw". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Valentina Kuryliw  
Chair, National Holodomor Education Committee, Ukrainian Canadian Congress  
Director of Education, Holodomor Research and Education Consortium (HREC)