



КОНГРЕС УКРАЇНЦІВ КАНАДИ

UKRAINIAN CANADIAN CONGRESS

CONGRÈS DES UKRAINIENS-CANADIENS

**UCC Briefing Note to the Honourable  
Marco Mendicino, Minister of Public Safety**

**The Rising Tide of Anti-Ukrainian Hate  
and Violence in Canada**

**Recommendations for a Canada-Wide Response**

**March 13, 2023**

## Executive Summary

Since February 24, 2022, when Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the Ukrainian community in Canada has faced a rising tide of hatred and violence.

Since February 24, 2022, over two dozen incidents across Canada have been publicly documented. Other incidents have gone unreported.

The increasing incidence of hate and violence targeting the Ukrainian community in Canada requires a concerted and coordinated Canada-wide response.

In order to address the rising tide of hate-motivated incidents targeting the Ukrainian community in Canada the UCC calls on the Government of Canada to:

1. Issue a public statement unequivocally condemning the rising pattern of hate-motivated attacks against the Ukrainian Canadian community and supporters of Ukraine;
2. Develop and deliver programs to educate the public and counter disinformation that incites hatred against Ukrainians;
3. Develop and deliver programs of media literacy as part of a national core curriculum starting in pre-school, similar to the program developed in Finland;
4. Educate the Canadian public to identify state sponsored propaganda and online information that is intended to mislead;
5. Renew and reinstate the *Communities at Risk: Security Infrastructure Program (SIP)* that provided federal funding for enhancing the security of community buildings and places of worship;
6. Expel diplomats of the Russian Federation and others, including agents of foreign interference who foment, orchestrate and finance campaigns of hatred against Ukrainians;
7. Prevent entry into Canada of supporters of Vladimir Putin and his genocidal regime who embolden those who would foment hatred against Ukrainians;
8. Introduce legislation that establishes a Foreign Agent Registry.

The UCC is in the process of establishing a **Community Safety Awareness Program**, which will liaise with local organizations and ensure that all hate motivated incidents and crimes are reported to the authorities.

## **The Issue**

Since February 24, 2022, when Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the Ukrainian community in Canada has faced a rising tide of hatred and violence.

The Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC) first raised this issue with the Minister of Public Safety and the Minister of Justice in May 2022. Since then, there has been a marked escalation in the number and severity of hateful incidents targeting the Ukrainian Canadian community.

Subsequently the UCC met with the Minister of Public Safety and the Toronto Chief of Police on February 1, 2023 and again with the Minister of Public Safety on February 14, 2023 to discuss the rising-tide anti-Ukrainian hate-motivated incidents.

Since February 24, 2022, over two dozen incidents across Canada have been publicly documented.<sup>1</sup> Other incidents have gone unreported. The documented incidents include, but are not limited to:

- Vandalism;
- Destruction of property;
- Vandalism of places of worship;
- Anti-Ukrainian graffiti on community buildings;
- Violent speech directed at Ukrainians;
- Drawing of symbols of hate on community buildings;
- Targeting of Ukrainian – Canadian owned businesses in Canada with the goal of creating economic and reputational harm;
- Libelling community organizations as “Nazis”;
- Threats to the safety and well-being of Ukrainian students and student organizations;
- Physical assaults on members of the community;
- Uttering threats based on individuals’ Ukrainian identity;
- Arson or attempted arson.

It is likely that given the rise in the attacks, there are also incidents targeting our community that go unreported by victims, due to the lack of any effective response from authorities.

## **The cumulative effect of anti-Ukrainian hate**

The increasing incidence of hate and violence targeting the Ukrainian community in Canada requires a concerted and coordinated Canada-wide response.

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<sup>1</sup> A list of hate-related incidents that have been reported by the media is appended to this brief as an Appendix.

Despite wide media coverage of the growing attacks on the Ukrainian community in Canada, the Task Force on Hate Crimes, which was established in March 2022 and is co-chaired by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, has not reached out to representatives of the Ukrainian Canadian community.

The Russian Federation has a track record of targeting the Ukrainian community in Canada and using disinformation to attempt to undermine social comity in Canada and other democratic societies.

As recently as July 7, 2022, Canada's Communication Security Establishment stated, "Kremlin officials continue to be directly involved in guiding and coordinating Russia-backed disinformation efforts."<sup>2</sup>

The Government of Canada has long been aware of the pernicious influence in Canada of representatives of the Russian government, including Russian diplomats who hide under the blanket of diplomatic immunity.

Despite this knowledge, the Government of Canada has failed to take any action against these individuals or to expel them from Canada. At the same time, the Government of Canada has failed to protect the Ukrainian Canadian community from their actions.

As early as 2020, the (heavily redacted) public version of the Annual Report for 2020 of the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians stated, "The Russian Federation also continues to exploit Russian diaspora and compatriot organizations in Canada."<sup>3</sup>

The UCC is unaware of any action by the Government of Canada in the two years since this report was published to address this threat.

The Russian embassy has been directly involved in illegal activity and acts of hate that targeted Ukrainians in Canada. For example, in August, 2022, three persons were caught on camera emerging from a car with diplomatic plates – the same plate numbers were subsequently seen on a car on the property of the Russian embassy – and destroying a blue and yellow painted bicycle. They also spray painted the letter "Z" – which symbolizes support for the genocide Russia is committing against Ukraine.

The UCC is not aware of any action being taken by the Government of Canada in response to this incident, despite overwhelming evidence that persons tied to the Russian embassy are violating Canadian criminal law.

Russian officials have also engaged in intimidation of demonstrators who, in accordance with their Charter-protected right to free speech, gather outside the Russian

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<sup>2</sup> [https://twitter.com/cse\\_cst/status/1545120959887298566](https://twitter.com/cse_cst/status/1545120959887298566)

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.nsicop-cpsnr.ca/reports/rp-2021-04-12-ar/annual\\_report\\_2020\\_public\\_en.pdf](https://www.nsicop-cpsnr.ca/reports/rp-2021-04-12-ar/annual_report_2020_public_en.pdf)

embassy daily to express their opposition to Russia's genocide against Ukraine and their outrage at the crimes Russia is committing.

Given the documented attempts of these so-called "diplomats" to undermine Canadian democracy, it would, in the view of the UCC, strain credulity to assume that there is no involvement of the Russian embassy and the Russian state in the growing threat of anti-Ukrainian attacks in Canada.

Despite this, no action has been taken against these individuals and to the knowledge of the UCC, no Russian diplomats have been expelled from Canada since 2018.<sup>4</sup>

As the Canadian Security Intelligence Service stated:

When communities in Canada are subjected to threats, harassment, intimidation, or other deceptive means by foreign states that are either seeking to gather support or mute criticism of their policies, these activities constitute a threat to the safety of Canadians and to Canada's security. By aggressively conducting such activities, state actors show disregard for Canadian democratic values and open society.<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, those who engage in acts of hatred directed at members of the Ukrainian community are only emboldened when sympathizers of Putin and his murderous regime, like Alexander Ovechkin, are permitted to enter Canada unreservedly.<sup>6</sup>

The attacks on our community and the lack of effective response are particularly disturbing and traumatizing for those Ukrainians who have sought refuge from Russia's war in Canada.

Other members of the community are discouraged from and fearful of reporting incidents because they have not seen any meaningful response on the part of Canadian authorities to these acts of violence.

These issues are then exacerbated by morally inexplicable positions taken by organizations such as the Canadian Olympic Committee (COC), whose Executive Director declared the COC's "openness" to Russian athletes participating in the Olympics at a time when the vast majority of athletes who are Russian nationals, either through their direct support or through their silence, support Russia's genocide against Ukraine.

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<sup>4</sup> The Government of Canada stated at the time, "The four have been identified as intelligence officers or individuals who have used their diplomatic status to undermine Canada's security or interfere in our democracy." <https://www.canada.ca/en/global-affairs/news/2018/03/canada-expels-russian-diplomats-in-solidarity-with-united-kingdom.html>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.canada.ca/en/security-intelligence-service/corporate/publications/foreign-interference-threat-to-canadas-democratic-process.html#toc0>

<sup>6</sup> UCC Statement on Canada permitting entry to Putin supporter Ovechkin <https://www.ucc.ca/2023/01/29/ucc-statement-on-canada-permitting-entry-to-putin-supporter-ovechkin/>

Given the culture of impunity created by both the actions and inaction on the part of the Government, it is the view of our community that Canada is becoming a safe haven for those who seek to undermine democracy in Canada and who engage in acts of hatred against the Ukrainian community in Canada.

These incidents ought not be viewed in isolation. All of these incidents reinforce each other and have a cumulative effect. When a university dismisses the concerns of students who feel threatened, it sends the signal that these threats can continue. When a Russian diplomat violates Canadian law and faces no consequences, it sends the signal to other vandals that they too will face no consequence. When a supporter of Putin is allowed entry to Canada, it sends the signal that support for genocide is tolerated. When Canadian institutions support the participation of Russian athletes in international competition, it sends the signal that it is time to “move on” from the crimes Russia is committing.

The net effect of these incidents is traumatic for the survivors of Russia’s genocide who have sought refuge in Canada. It is dehumanizing to community members who are made to feel that their concerns do not matter. It is deleterious to the physical safety and well-being of all Canadians.

The longer the Government of Canada takes to act, the more brazen, grievous, violent – and frequent – these attacks will become.

### **Recommendations to the Government of Canada:**

In order to address the rising tide of hate-motivated incidents targeting the Ukrainian community in Canada the UCC calls on the Government of Canada to:

1. Issue a public statement unequivocally condemning the rising pattern of hate-motivated attacks against the Ukrainian Canadian community and supporters of Ukraine;
2. Develop and deliver programs to educate the public and counter disinformation that incites hatred against Ukrainians;
3. Develop and deliver programs of media literacy as part of a national core curriculum starting in pre-school, similar to the program developed in Finland;
4. Educate the Canadian public to identify state sponsored propaganda and online information that is intended to mislead;
5. Renew and reinstate the *Communities at Risk: Security Infrastructure Program (SIP)* that provided federal funding for enhancing the security of community buildings and places of worship;

6. Expel diplomats of the Russian Federation and others, including agents of foreign interference who foment, orchestrate and finance campaigns of hatred against Ukrainians;
7. Prevent entry into Canada of supporters of Vladimir Putin and his genocidal regime who embolden those who would foment hatred against Ukrainians;
8. Introduce legislation that establishes a Foreign Agent Registry.

### **UCC Response – Community Safety Awareness Program**

The UCC is in the process of establishing a Community Safety Awareness Program, which will liaise with local organizations and ensure that all hate motivated incidents and crimes are reported to the authorities.

#### **Recommendations to law enforcement agencies:**

- Liaise with all law enforcement services across Canada to disseminate information and raise awareness about the rising incidence of anti-Ukrainian hate incidents and crimes;
- Ensure the thorough investigation, including proper identification, recording and prosecution of hate motivated incidents and crimes;
- Implement an enhanced method of reporting hate motivated incidents and crimes;
- Provide appropriate resources and support to victims of hate motivated incidents and crimes;
- Update current training to include enhanced focus on hate crimes as they relate to the Ukrainian community, highlighting the drastic increase in reported and non-reported hate crime incidents;
- Provide additional security to targeted individuals and institutions in the Ukrainian community;
- Track and report incidents of anti-Ukrainian hate incidents and crimes;
- Investigate the rising incidence of hatred targeted at Ukrainian students on campuses across the country;
- Ensure hate crime training is provided to all special constable employed at all colleges/universities.

## APPENDIX

**Incidents of Attacks on Ukrainian Canadians since February 24, 2022**

**Burnaby, BC** – March 19 2022 – Mural destroyed

<https://dailyhive.com/vancouver/burnaby-mural-ukraine-vandalized>

**Calgary, AB** – February 6, 2023 Calgary man faces prejudice due to Ukrainian nationality

<https://calgary.citynews.ca/2023/02/06/calgary-man-prejudice-ukrainian-nationality/>

**Charlottetown, PEI** – April 11, 2022 – Flags vandalized and stolen

<https://www.saltwire.com/atlantic-canada/news/charlottetown-couple-receives-new-flag-from-ukrainian-community-after-being-target-of-vandalism-100717223/>

**Edmonton, AB** March 13, 2022 – physical attack on Ukrainian fans at hockey game

<https://www.ucc.ca/2022/03/13/violent-hate-crime-against-ukrainian-canadians-in-edmonton/>

**Edmonton, AB** – May 13 2022 – UNF Building attack

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/ukrainian-national-federation-of-canada-building-vandalized-swastikas-1.6453050>

**Kitchener, ON** – April 2022 – Z painted on donate to Ukraine signs

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/police-across-canada-investigate-crimes-against-ukrainians-supporters-1.5871495>

**Levis, QC** – April 2022 – Z spraypainted, flag stolen

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/police-across-canada-investigate-crimes-against-ukrainians-supporters-1.5871495>

**Markham, ON** – April 29, 2022 – Hate-motivated vandalism of vehicle

<https://torontosun.com/news/local-news/man-sought-in-vandalism-of-vehicle-with-ukrainian-flag-in-markham>

**Montreal, QC** - September 20, 2022 – attack on demonstrators outside Russian consulate

<https://www.ucc.ca/2022/09/20/hateful-attacks-on-supporters-of-ukraine-in-canada/>



**Ottawa, ON** – August 17, 2022 – attack on Ukrainian symbol outside Russian embassy

<https://www.ucc.ca/2022/08/17/hateful-attack-on-ukrainian-symbol-in-ottawa/>

**Ottawa, ON** – January 27, 2023. Carleton University – Anti-Ukrainian hate on campus

<https://charlatan.ca/2023/01/27/breaking-carleton-student-groups-address-anti-ukrainian-hate-on-campus/>

**St. Catharines, ON** June 20, 2022 – Vandalism targets homes showing support

<https://www.stcatharinesstandard.ca/news/crime/2022/06/20/unconscionable-vandalism-targets-niagara-homes-that-show-support-for-ukraine.html>

**Sudbury, ON** – April 12 , 2022 – attack on church

<https://www.ucc.ca/2022/04/12/hate-crime-against-ukrainians-in-sudbury-on/>

**Sudbury, ON** – April 23, 2022 – UNF Building windows smashed

<https://www.baytoday.ca/local-news/vandalism-at-ukrainian-national-federation-building-in-sudbury-under-investigation-as-hate-bias-incident-5288043>

**Toronto, ON** – February 8, 2022 – Future Bakery attack

<https://www.ucc.ca/2022/02/08/hate-crime-targeting-ukrainian-canadians-in-toronto/>

**Toronto, ON** - November 17 2022 community leader FB post



**Toronto, ON** – February 28 2022 – Multiple cars with Ukrainian flags targeted

<https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/it-felt-like-it-was-war-here-toronto-residents-allegedly-targeted-for-flying-ukraine-flag-1.5799560>

**Toronto, ON** – April 29, 2022 – Condo owner forced to remove Ukrainian flag

<https://www.cp24.com/news/i-was-forced-to-be-silent-toronto-condo-owner-told-to-remove-ukrainian-flag-from-window-1.5882187>

**Toronto, ON** – June 24, 2022 – Vandalism outside MP Baker’s office

[https://twitter.com/Yvan\\_Baker/status/1540437392129228801](https://twitter.com/Yvan_Baker/status/1540437392129228801)



**Toronto, ON** – Ukrainian National Federation building on Evans Ave

*Stand With Ukraine* sign vandalized on two separate occasions. Police reports filed.

**Toronto, ON** – School chatroom

Student posting in chatroom holding rifle with a caption “bouta kill some dirty Ukrainians”. Police notified. Occurrence numbers provided.

**Vancouver, BC** – February 24, 2023 – Flyers with pictures of Putin, Kadyrov, “Z” put on cars at Ukrainian rally



**Victoria, BC** – April 20, 2022 – Arson attack on priest’s home

<https://www.ucc.ca/2022/04/20/arson-attack-on-ukrainian-priest-family-in-victoria/>

**Victoria, BC** – January 30, 2023 – Anti-Ukrainian harassment at UVic

<https://vancouverisland.ctvnews.ca/uvic-launches-investigation-into-alleged-anti-ukrainian-harassment-on-campus-1.6252171>

**Waterloo, ON** – April 1 2022 – Vandalism at U of Waterloo

<https://globalnews.ca/news/8728082/ukraine-russia-z-university-of-waterloo-vandalism/>

**Winnipeg:** July 8, 2022 Ukrainian Cultural and Educational Centre

 Oseredok Ukrainian Cultural and Educational Centre  
July 8, 2022

Dear Members and Supporters of Oseredok,

In the past two months, Oseredok has been the target of malicious and unprovoked vandalism – Canada and Ukraine flags and flagpoles were stolen and a Boutique window was smashed. All will be quickly replaced and repaired and the building will be under watchful eyes! These immoral attacks have not discouraged the Centre’s staff and volunteers. Our collective spirits are energized and focused on the role of Oseredok as a beacon of optimism, courage, and strength for the Ukrainian Canadian community. Oseredok is a dynamic and welcoming Ukrainian Centre. Please continue to visit and experience all it has to offer — and bring your family and friends! Слава Україні! 🇺🇦🇨🇦

