

# **УКРАЇНСЬКА РАДА З ПИТАНЬ** **БІЖЕНЦІВ** **UKRAINIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL**

*To the attention of the media  
6 February 2012*

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **UKRAINIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL DEMANDS ACCESS TO DETAINED SOMALI NATIONALS, EXPRESSING CONCERN ABOUT RIOT POLICE ACTIONS AT ZHURAVYCHI CENTRE**

The Ukrainian Refugee Council (URC) has requested that Ukrainian authorities immediately grant URC member organizations access to migrants detained in Zhuravychi Migrants Accommodation Centre (Volyn region).

Earlier, the URC and several international organizations (including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch) reported that in the first half of January Somali nationals detained in Zhuravychi MAC had gone on a hunger strike in protest at their desperate situation.

The URC member organizations were informed that situation of detainees at the MAC has not improved since then. Moreover, a specialized MOI detachment, armed with batons and tear gas, entered the MAC a few days ago, threatening and using force towards some of the detained foreign nationals.

On 18 January, 2012, the Ukrainian Refugee Council (the URC) issued a public statement, calling on Ukrainian authorities to comply with Ukraine's international obligations and to break the vicious circle of arrests, detentions and lack of legal status that Somali nationals in need of protection found themselves in. The URC has to note that situation has only deteriorated since then: according to reports of international organizations and detainees' statements, a specialized MOI detachment was brought to Zhuravychi MAC to use psychological and physical intimidation towards persons on strike, forcing them to eat in the dining room. Also, it became known that, in addition to Somalis, there are nationals of other countries in need of international protection in the MAC.

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Ukrainian Refugee Council (URC) is an informal coalition of Ukrainian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and charity foundations (CFs) which defend rights and interests of refugees and asylum seekers. URC members are: CF "Rokada" (Kyiv), CF "Donetsk Foundation for Social Protection and Charity", "Amnesty International in Ukraine", Odesa civic organization "Faith, Hope, Love", International Foundation of Health and Environment Protection "Region Karpat" (NEEKA), Foundation for Naturalization and Human Rights "Assistance" (Simferopil), "Vinnytsia Human Rights Group" NGO, Trade Union "Solidarity" Legal Consultancy Centre "Human Rights have no borders" (Lviv), "South Ukrainian Center of Young Lawyers" NGO (Odesa), CF "Caritas", "Social Action Centre" NGO (Kyiv), "Social Assistance Service" CF (Kharkiv), Charity Organization «Medical Aid Committee in Zakarpattya» (Uzhgorod)

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With the purpose of examining the situation in Zhuravychi MAC and communicating with protesting detainees, the URC asked the State Migration Service for access to the Centre. No reply has been received yet.

The URC notes that placement of the specialized MOI detachment at the MAC and use of force and violence towards persons, who are attempting to settle their situation in Ukraine in accordance with international law, are impermissible acts.

Only by terminating use of force actions towards the detainees, and providing access to persons in detention for Ukrainian civil society organizations, Ukrainian government can show willingness to resolve, lawfully and humanely, the crisis of Somali nationals, as well as intentions to uphold human rights.

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