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Valery Engel, 1-st Vice-President of the International Human Rights Movement "World without Nazism"

ANTI-DEMOCRATIC MARKERS IN UKRAINE

Dear Mr Chairman, ladies and gentlemen,

As you may know, on September 25, President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko held a press conference where he described soldiers of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists □ Ukrainian Insurgent Army (OUN-UPA) of the World War Two period as heroes who defended Ukraine and, more importantly, AN EXAMPLE TO FOLLOW.

Recall that he said, "OUN-UPA is a very important question and delivered just in time. Previously, it used to split the country and therefore it was not given a priority. Now, however, is a very good time. Who is a soldier that defends his country as a warrior of UPA? If you paid attention, in my speech, inauguration, and on the Day of Ukrainian Flag, UPA warriors were mentioned as heroes. That is my position." Previously, President Viktor Yushchenko awarded to title of Hero of Ukraine to the OUN leader, Stepan Bandera, and UPA commander, Roman Shukhevych.

I would like to remind you that these UPA soldiers were allied with Wehrmacht; in 1939, they participated in the occupation of Poland, and since 1941 they conducted military operations against the Soviet Army and Polish partisan units. During the war, OUN organised Jewish pogroms, such as one in Lviv in August 1941. OUN-UPA actively participated in Jewish executions in other regions of Ukraine, participated in the Volyn massacre, etc.

Meanwhile, during his inauguration and aforementioned press conference, President Poroshenko called UPA as an example of heroes. This indicates that Stepan Bandera's ideas are becoming the official ideology in Ukraine. Radical nationalist, Nazi ideology of Hitler's allies, even though they decided to fight against both fronts in 1943, is becoming the ideology of Ukraine. Since Maidan, we know the newly popular slogans of Second World War Bandera followers, that became a part of the country's political discourse today □ "Glory Heroes", "Moskals [i.e. Russians] on knives", etc.

Rehabilitation and de-marginalisation of Nazis and collaborationists is not a new trend in Europe. However, for the first time in post-war history the Nazi ideology and practice is presented by the state as an example that will be used to bring up the youth, and used as a basis for the state policy towards national minorities. One cannot glorify Bandera and omit such awkward moments as his national policy, especially in late 1930s □ early 1940s.

In fact, we are at a turning point in not just Ukrainian history, but the history of whole Europe. Legalisation of Nazi ideology and glorification of Nazism is usually followed by de-marginalisation of modern neo-Nazis, their inclusion in political establishment and more discrimination of national minorities. Radical nationalists are a problem in all European countries and their influence grows, as indicated by the recent European Elections.

If today, Europe and America turn their blind eye to the revival of Nazi ideology at the government level and continue to use radical nationalists to establish democracy in their countries, then tomorrow a *global* problem of combatting radicalism in Europe will arise, because radicalism will go out of control just as it recently did in the Middle East. This would no longer be a problem in Ukraine alone, but in Europe as well. De-marginalisation of Nazism and its ideology in Ukraine, will inevitably have an impact on similar processes in Europe.

This will not be chaos as it is in the Middle East. It will be iron discipline and rigid ideological bias of life that will no longer have room for democratic values.