

World Council of Subcarpathian Rusyns

Dear Madame Chair, ladies, and gentlemen, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak and bring to your attention how the Subcarpathian Rusyns indigenous people live (Transcarpathia of present-day Ukraine). Unfortunately, Rusyns are still not recognized by the Ukrainian authorities, despite our efforts.

The ancestors of the Rusyns were Slavic tribes living in the territory of the Carpathians in the modern lands of Ukraine, Slovakia, Poland, and Hungary. Cut off from the neighboring tribes, they gradually incorporated into the Polish, Ukrainian Slovak national terrain, and later on into the State boundaries, the Rusyns stood out, while maintaining special closeness to the Ukrainians.

The Rusyns are an independent people ! The first theory, essentially, Rusyn, states that the Rusyns are a separate and independent, full-fledged fourth East Slavic people.

The lands of the Rusyns gradually belonged to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Hungarian Kingdom, Austria-Hungary, the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union, Ukraine, and their population was subjected to assimilation everywhere.

The assimilation of Rusyns took place in Austria-Hungary and in Czechoslovakia, but it was not intrusive or conflicting in nature. Today, the situation is analogous in Ukraine. As a result, a large percentage of Rusyns began to think of themselves as Ukrainians, even in cases where they preserve their own language. The mystery surrounding this people is complicated by the Lemkos, who territorially coincide with the Rusyns but consider themselves as either a sub-ethnic group of Ukrainians, a separate people, or as Rusyns. In fact, the Rusyns accounted for a large part of the so-called Ukrainian emigration overseas, primarily to Canada and the United States. The Rusyns are indignant at the fact that their opinions are not taken into account, their history is distorted, and that they are prevented from learning the Rusyn language. The Ruthenian State, Subcarpathian Rus, was established as an object of international law by a peace treaty in 1919.

However, after World War II, it was eliminated and incorporated to Soviet Ukraine. In 1991, a referendum was held in Transcarpathia, during which approximately 80% of residents actually voted for autonomous status for the region. We demand a solution to this senseless conflict and ask help from the UN and other international legal institutions to help our people resolve this problem. We also hope on new leadership in Ukraine, that that rhetoric related to Rusyns will change.

Rusyns want to be themselves in their historical homeland, learn their language, honor their culture, and to remember their history!

I now turn to the recommendations:

-point out to Ukrainian authorities the inadmissibility of persecution and violence against Rusyns on the basis of language; we also ask that the UN recommendations of 2006 be implemented.

- 1) Formally recognize the Ruthenian nationality in Ukraine;
- 2) Include the nationality "Rusyns" in the official list of nationalities of Ukraine with a separate code;
- 3) Stop the practice of the information blockade on Rusynism in state media;
- 4) Stop the practice of the tacit persecution of supporters of the Rusyn movement who work in government agencies;
- 5) Open a department of Rusyn language and literature at the Uzhgorod State University;
- 6) Create a scientific center of Rusynology for the study of the history, ethnology, literary criticism, linguistics, and folklore of the Carpathian Region;
- 7) Introduce the teaching of the Ruthenian language in Transcarpathia on regional rights!

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