



July 18, 2019

## ***HHRF ALERT:***

### **Police Raid Homes of Hungarian Minority Leaders in Ukraine to Intimidate Voters**

#### **Sole Parliamentary Representative for the Community Appeals to European Parliament**

Following armed raids at the homes of ethnic Hungarian community leaders in Subcarpathia, Ukraine, the president of the Cultural Alliance of Hungarians in Subcarpathia (KMKSZ) called on the newly-elected European Parliament president to “demand that Ukraine observe the Law on Elections, in order to give minorities at least a fair chance to have their interests represented at the parliamentary level.” In his July 15 letter to **EP President Sassoli, László Brenzovics** wrote about “numerous illegal activities and undemocratic policies,” which threaten the fairness” of the July 21 parliamentary elections and the future of his community.



Locals surround home of Károly Rezes on July 15 in show of solidarity against police harassment

In a show of solidarity, locals rushed to the home of ethnic Hungarian **Károly Rezes** - an elected official on the Subcarpathia County Council – on Monday when police stormed his Szőlősgyula (Diula) house with a warrant falsely accusing him of buying votes. A hearing is scheduled in Kiev on July 19. Earlier that day, police also raided the home of Salank (Shalanky) mayor, **Viktor Aljohin**.

Brenzovics told *karpatalja.net* on Tuesday that “Accusations of us buying votes is absurd and nothing other than attempts to intimidate the activists and representatives of the Hungarian community in Subcarpathia...we emphatically protest the fact that authorities are harassing us instead of pursuing the real perpetrators of election fraud.” Moreover, the Hungarian community stands to lose any and all representation in the Rada with the rejection of a Subcarpathian voting constituency in violation of Article 18 on the Law on Elections to the Supreme Council of Ukraine.

"The intimidation and harassment of Hungarian community leaders, journalists, teachers, and organizations continues unabated," states the appeal for help to Sassoli and the use of his good offices on behalf of minority rights and democratic practices. In fact, none too soon, the Hungarian Cultural Alliance learned, via Twitter, on Thursday, July 18, that acting Foreign Minister **Jehor Bozsok** had instructed the Ukrainian Security Service to begin criminal proceedings against KMKSZ. The charges? Apparently using the "Hungarian colors" of red-white-green on a map in its publication to indicate those election districts of concern for ethnic Hungarians in Subcarpathia is tantamount to "inciting separatism" and threatening "the inviolability of Ukraine's territorial integrity" per Article 110, Section 2 of the penal code. Brenzovics denounced the foreign minister's actions as those fomenting anti-Hungarian sentiments on the heels of the election, and appealed to the central authorities for normalized relations between the communities.

Read the entire letter below.

**ГРОМАДСЬКА ОРГАНІЗАЦІЯ  
„ТОВАРИСТВО УГОРСЬКОЇ  
КУЛЬТУРИ ЗАКАРПАТТЯ.”**

88 000 м. Ужгород, Православна наб. 5,  
Закарпатська обл., Україна

Tel./fax: (380 312) 61 72 79, (380 312) 61 32 54



**KÁRPÁTALJAI MAGYAR  
KULTURÁLIS SZÖVETSÉG**

88 000 Ungvár, Pravoszláv part 5.,  
Kárpátalja, Ukrajna

e-mail: elnok@kmsz.com.ua

www.kmsz.com.ua

**H.E. Mr. David Sassoli  
President of the European Parliament  
Brussels**

1399/2019

July 15, 2019

**Dear Mr. President,**

First, allow me to congratulate you on your election as President of the European Parliament, and to wish you success and patience in your new position.

In less than a weeks' time, on July 21, Ukraine will hold parliamentary elections. As a leader of the Hungarian minority in Ukraine, I must call your attention to numerous illegal activities and undemocratic policies, which threaten the fairness of these elections and thereby the future of my community.

Just as during the previous parliamentary elections in 2014, the Central Election Committee has once again rejected a proposal that would have created a Sub-Carpathian voting constituency in an area with a high concentration of ethnic Hungarians. The failure to ensure such a constituency is a direct violation of Article 18 of the Law on „Elections to the Supreme Council of Ukraine.” This failure of the authorities to enforce the law deprives the Hungarian community of the opportunity to elect a Parliamentary representative to the Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada.

As the elections approach, we have observed other violations which make a farce of the democratic process. As in earlier years, some political parties are buying the votes of the people by offering them money – usually a small sum, which is nevertheless significant for a poor family.

In addition, parties are resorting to another well-established method of dividing the vote: by running a candidate with a similar name. Usually this „candidate” lacks any political background and is uninterested in holding office; he runs simply because he is paid to do so, to win away votes from a candidate with similar name.

Following Mr. Zelenskyi's recent presidential victory, the previously unrelenting anti-Hungarian propaganda, which branded the minority as an „enemy,” has largely receded from the forefront of Ukraine's mass media. However, the intimidation and harassment of Hungarian community leaders, journalists, teachers, and organizations continue unabated.

We believe that ethnic Hungarians in Ukraine deserve treatment, rights and opportunities, both in school and everyday life, equal to those of the majority nationality. We do believe in human rights, even though we live outside the European Union. We are committed to a common European future of our nations, in which people can practice their constitutional rights as in any other European country.

I would like to ask your help and the use of your good offices to impress upon the government of Ukraine that the restriction of minority rights and democratic processes undermines stability, not only in our region but elsewhere in the country. In addition, we ask the European Parliament to demand that Ukraine observe the Law on Elections, in order to give minorities at least a fair chance to have their interests represented at the parliamentary level.

The protection of minority rights and democratic processes, and the other pillars of international law, would encourage Ukraine's integration into Western international institutions and alliances – a goal fervently shared by the Hungarian national minority.

I look forward to your reply.

Your sincerely,

  


Yasyi Brenzovych  
President

Cultural Alliance of Hungarians in Sub-Carpathia

