

UKRAINE: Remember Odessa 2nd May 2014 Tragedy

– See *pictures of the 5th anniversary* at <https://bit.ly/2PHoU6Y>

– By Willy Fautré

– HRWF (02.05.2019) – Five years ago, on 2nd May 2014, 48 people died in two violent confrontations between pro-Maidan and anti-Maidan activists marching in the centre of Odessa and several hours later in Kulikovo Square (a few kilometres away).

Two weeks later I was in Odessa and I started my investigation about the tragic events. All narratives at that time as well as later on were biased on both sides in Ukraine. Putin and his friends in Ukraine instrumentalized the tragedy with their distorted narratives and their fake news to serve the political agenda of the Kreml. This propaganda presenting Ukraine as a state ruled by fascists is still alive today and was even perpetuated until last year through side-events at the European Parliament in Brussels.

Several investigation commissions in Ukraine, most of them lacking neutrality, published questionable reports and nobody was finally sentenced to a prison term. The main leaders of the deadly clashes in the centre of the city managed to flee to a “safe and friendly country”. Others in Kulikovo Square where most anti-Maidan activists died in the fire of the trade union building, were not prosecuted. The Council of Europe published the only official report that was reliable. Its findings corresponded to ours.

Today UNIAN, a Ukrainian press agency, published an article

about a 13-page UN briefing note entitled “Accountability for Killings and Violent Deaths on 2 May 2014 in Odesa” and drafted by the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (HRMMU) (<https://bit.ly/2GLyt04>).

Conclusions and Recommendations of the UN Mission

Five years after the events of 2 May 2014 in Odesa, HRMMU notes that no one has been held responsible for the acts that led to the killings and violent deaths of 48 people and injuries to an estimated 247 people. HRMMU is concerned that the challenges described pose a serious impediment to the provision of access to justice for victims and their families. Accountability for crimes and access to justice for all is essential to establish public trust in the judiciary and the rule of law, and may serve as a bedrock for reconciliation and social cohesion.

50. Recommendations to the Government of Ukraine:

Office of the Prosecutor General

1. Ensure effective, prompt, thorough and impartial investigations into the acts of killing and violent deaths perpetrated during the 2 May 2014 violence in Odesa and consider the possibility of transferring the lead investigative role from the Odesa Regional Police Department to the Main Investigation Unit of the National Police.

National Police

1. Investigate effectively, promptly, thoroughly and impartially all acts of killing and violent deaths perpetrated during the 2 May 2014 violence in Odesa;
2. Consider deploying senior investigators with relevant experience to the investigative team in charge of investigations;
3. Ensure public order and provide security to all parties

involved in the trials related to the 2 May 2014 violence in Odesa so that the cases of killings and violent deaths perpetrated in this context can be considered promptly, independently and impartially.

Presidents of courts of first instance

1. Grant priority status to the trials in the cases of killings and violent deaths perpetrated in the context of the 2 May 2014 violence in Odesa to ensure consideration of the cases without undue delay.

High Council of Justice, High Qualification Commission of Judges of Ukraine, President of Ukraine

1. Ensure qualification re-assessment of existing judges and recruitment of new judges without undue delay.

51. Recommendations to the international community, including to the Russian Federation:

Ensure that extradition requests for all absconded suspects in criminal cases related to the 2 May violence in Odesa are processed in a timely manner;

Consider providing international legal assistance in investigations conducted by Ukrainian authorities against individuals in relation to 2 May 2014 violence, if the requests of their extradition cannot be processed.

See **HRWF** **report**
at <https://hrwf.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Odesa-2nd-May-2014-Tragedy.pdf>

Act I

6 people killed by firearms in the centre of the city (allegedly 4 pro-Maidan and 2 anti-Maidan)

Anti-Maidan activists came armed to the city centre

Gunshots fired by pro-Russian aggressors; first person killed

Street fighting left six dead, more than 100 wounded

The role of the medical services

The role of the police

Act II

About 40 people died in Kulikovo Square

Anti-Maidan crowd flees to Trade Union building

Firefighters slow to respond

Bloodiest day in Odessa since 1918

Act III

Anti-Maidan activists attack a police station and release prisoners

ANNEX

List of the victims by name and their death conditions

HRWF is on the side of all the families who lost one of their members in this tragedy which could have been avoided.

UNIAN articles:

<https://bit.ly/2VMFA2E>

<https://bit.ly/2VFNeVu>

<https://bit.ly/2JaRc8D>