

**UKRAINIAN CANADIAN COMMUNITY EXPRESSES HEARTFELT GRATITUDE TO
THE BALTIC COMMUNITIES FOR THEIR STRONG SUPPORT OF UKRAINE**



Photo by: Aivars Vinters

26 June, 2015 - TORONTO. The Ukrainian Canadian community expresses its heartfelt gratitude to the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian Canadian communities for their strong support of Ukraine as the people of Ukraine bravely defend themselves against Russia's brutal invasion.

At an event in Toronto at the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ Lithuanian Church on June 14, the Latvian Relief Society of Canada Toronto *Daugavas Vanagi* presented the Ukrainian Canadian Congress Toronto branch with a generous donation in the amount of \$10,000 to support the work of UCC-Toronto's Euromaidan Committee in providing humanitarian aid to Ukraine.

"As a result of the Hitler-Stalin Pact, the alliance between Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia, the Baltic States were invaded by Russian armed forces in 1940. During the first occupation, the Year of Terror, 1940 -1941, tens of thousands of all age groups, from elderly to infants were arrested, tortured, or murdered. Many of those, sent in cattle cars to the Siberian Gulag, did not survive the trip or deprivations of the concentration camps," stated Andris Kesteris, President of the Baltic Federation and Latvian National Federation in Canada.

"This year, Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians mark the 74th anniversary of this Baltic tragedy," said Joana Kuras, President, Lithuanian Canadian Community. "Those who know their history, see a direct comparison to the war being waged against Ukraine today. While Ukraine's sovereign territory has been attacked and occupied, threats of aggression against the Baltics, Poland and other parts of Europe are increasing."

Accepting the donation on behalf of the Ukrainian Canadian community was, UCC-Toronto Vice President of Finance Petro Schturyn. "The Ukrainian community is blessed to have such good friends in the Baltic community. We stood together as brothers and sisters and fought against Soviet occupation for more than 50 years, and today Ukrainians are at the forefront of a similar invasion by Russia. Our heartfelt thanks to The Latvian Relief Society of Canada, "Daugavas Vanagi" - Toronto Branch for their generous donation of \$10,000 for humanitarian aid to help Ukraine," said Schturyn.

A memorial service was held at the Church with the participation of Father Yaroslav Shudrak of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. Borys Ostapienko performed several moving pieces on the bandura. Members of Parliament Ted Opitz and Bernard Trottier as well as Member of Provincial Parliament Yvan Baker offered remarks.

The Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian communities were represented by Toomas Merilo, Estonian Central Council, Andris Kesteris, Latvian National Federation in Canada, and Joana Kuras, Lithuanian Canadian Community.

The event was attended by representatives of UCC Toronto, including Vice President Olya Grod, the President of the Crimean Tatar Community in Ontario and Euromaidan Committee member Rustem Isray, Bohdan Duchkowsky, Euromaidan Committee, former member of Parliament Borys Wresznewskyj and Petro Cyhynka, League of Ukrainian Canadians.

To view this on the UCC website, please click [here](#)

To view photos from this event, please visit the UCC website: www.ucc.ca/BalticFederationCommemoration

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