

# Ukrainian National Assembly – Ukrainian National Self Defence

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The **UNA** (*Ukrainian National Assembly*) (Ukrainian: УНА, *Українська Національна Асамблея*), is a Ukrainian political party that better known as Ukrianian National Assembly - Ukrainian People's Self-Defense (UNA-UNSO). In the parliament it is represented as the **Ukrainian National Assembly**. The organization is often perceived as a far-right in Ukraine and abroad.<sup>[6][7]</sup> The organization was established by veterans of the Soviet war in Afghanistan as a reaction on the creation of the State Committee on the State of Emergency in Moscow. It is one of the most active organizations that counteracts against Moscow's policies in the Caucasian region and the spread of Russian nationalism. The ideology of the organization was well depicted in a documentary film of Georgy Gongadze "Shadows of the War" (1994).

| <b>Ukrainian National Assembly</b><br><b>Українська Національна Асамблея</b>        |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
|  |                                    |
| <b>Leader</b>   | Yuriy Shukhevych <sup>[1][2]</sup> |
| <b>Founded</b>  | 3/4 November 1990                  |
| <b>Headquarters</b>   | Kiev                               |
| <b>Membership (2006)</b>  | 8,000 <sup>[3]</sup>               |
| <b>Ideology</b>   | Ukrainian nationalism              |
| <b>Political position</b>   | Far-right <sup>[4][5]</sup>        |
| <b>International affiliation</b>  | <i>None</i>                        |
| <b>Colours</b>  | Red, black                         |
| <b>Website</b>  |                                    |
| <a href="http://www.una-unso.in.ua">http://www.una-unso.in.ua</a>                   |                                    |
| Politics of Ukraine<br>Political parties<br>Elections                               |                                    |

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## History

### First years of establishment

Ukrainian National Assembly (UNA) was created on June 30, 1990 in Lviv under the name of Ukrainian Inter-party Assembly (UMA). It was led by a maverick politician and nationalist writer Dmytro Korchynskyy. On November 3–4, 1990 a constituent congress of the Ukrainian National Association (UNS) took place in Kiev. On January 11, 1991 squads of UNS headed by Yuriy Tyma guarded the Seimas Palace during the January Events in Lithuania when the Soviet Union invaded Lithuania. On June 30, 1991 some 200 members of UNS

conducted a torch parade to commemorate the Declaration of Ukrainian Independence in Lviv 1941.

In the first days of the 1991 Soviet coup d'état attempt a squad of UNS led by the Vietnam War veteran Valeriy Bobrovych departed to Moscow. Later that squad laid foundation in creating the "Argo" battalion. On August 19, 1991 in the fight against the State Committee on the State of Emergency, UNS creates squads of the Ukrainian People's Self-Defense (UNSO) in Kiev. The squads were formed around a small group of ethnically Ukrainian Soviet army veterans who fought in Afghanistan (see Soviet war in Afghanistan). Because of the 1991 Declaration of Independence of Ukraine on September 8, 1991 the 6th session of Ukrainian Inter-party Assembly was officially renamed as the Ukrainian National Assembly, while among people it became known as UNA-UNSO due to the UNSO close association with UNA. The first head of the party was elected Yuriy-Bohdan Shukhevych, a son of Roman Shukhevych.

Since gaining its independence in 1991 Ukraine chronically suffers from separatists movements directed to reunite some of the Ukrainian territories with Russia and other neighboring countries. UNA-UNSO managed to stop enthusiastic activities of a People's Deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union Goncharov in Donets basin in reestablishing the Donetsk-Krivoy Rog Soviet Republic and its Donetsk National Guard. In Kiev was liquidated an organization "Patriotic forum" (Otyechestvyennyi forum). In November 1991 UNSO disperse their congress and rally. Due to the brawl involving UNSO fighters the government conducted the first mass arrests against UNSO activists. In Odessa UNSO stopped an initiative in creation of the "Novorossiysk Republic" which also influenced another separatists movements in Bukovina and Zakarpattia. On June 7, 1992 a Lviv team of UNSO dispersed the Romanian congress in Chernivtsi which was provoking in uniting of the Northern Bukovina with Romania.

## Crimea

Since 1991 and to this day on the territory of Ukraine, Crimea and Sevastopol, are located forces of the Russian Federation, which explicitly contradict the Constitution of Ukraine. In 1991 on the territory of Ukraine were located the Russian Black Sea Fleet and the 126th Division of Coastal Defense subordinated to Moscow commanded by the Russian admiral Igor Kasatonov. Admiral Kasatonov sharply reacted to all pro-Ukrainian actions of sailors such as labeling them traitors, hounded or discharging from Navy the officers who were sworn allegiance to Ukraine. When in April 1992 headquarters officers of the Naval base in Novo-ozerne were sworn allegiance to the Ukrainian state, he ordered to block the base with armored tanks from the coast and with military ships from the sea. Kasatonov refused to execute any orders of the President of Ukraine and declarations of the Verkhovna Rada of Crimea. In Crimea over the official buildings were flying the official flags of the Soviet Union, openly acted militarized organizations of local Cossacks and other patriotic clubs.

Because of no laws of Ukraine seemed to be possible to enforce in Crimea, UNA-UNSO decided to conduct a series of crusade marches and prayers for the perished Ukrainians in Odessa, Kherson, and Sevastopol. In the campaign have agreed to participate priests of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAPC) and the Kiev choir "Homin".

## History since 1994

Despite this during Ukrainian parliamentary election in 1994 three UNA-UNSO members were elected as deputies of Verkhovna Rada (Ukrainian parliament).

Between 1994 and 1997 UNA-UNSO members gained prominence in Ukraine through a number of anti-Russian actions. UNA-UNSO deputies destroyed a Russian flag in Ukrainian parliament, UNA-UNSO fighters joined the Chechen rebels in First Chechen War and fought against the Russian army, its activists organized street protests against Russian pop-stars visiting Ukraine. UNA-UNSO took sides in Ukrainian church affairs and in July 1995



UNA-UNSO members parade through the streets of Lviv

clashed with police during the funeral of Patriarch Volodymyr (Romaniuk), head of Ukrainian Orthodox Church - Kiev Patriarchate. UNA-UNSO supported Patriarch Filaret (Mykhailo Denysenko) excommunicated by the Russian Orthodox Church, and participated in violent attempts to capture church property for the new church, notably in Rivne and Volyn oblasts. Membership of the organization peaked at around 10 000 members, who were mostly young Ukrainians. About 90% of its members were between 18 and 35 years old. Ideology of the organization combine radical Ukrainian nationalism, anti-Semitism, support for an authoritarian form of government and "national-oriented" economy.

In 1997 government of Leonid Kuchma banned the Ukrainian National Assembly — Ukrainian National Self Defence. Members of UNA-UNSO responded with a number of violent street protests, resulted in over 250 arrests. Dmytro Korchynskyy himself was arrested and soon after left the ranks of UNA-UNSO.

In 1998 UNA-UNSO re-appeared as a more moderate strictly nationalist rather than a neo-Nazi organization<sup>[citation needed]</sup>. New leaders of the organizations became Andriy Shkil and Yuriy Shukhevych, son of prominent Ukrainian nationalist Roman Shukhevych.

UNA-UNSO participated in Ukrainian parliamentary election of 1998 but managed to get only 0.39% of the votes.<sup>[8]</sup>

In 2000 and 2001 members of Ukrainian National Assembly — Ukrainian Nationalistic Self Defense actively participated in Ukraine without Kuchma mass protest campaign.

During the 2002 parliamentary elections Andriy Shkil won a single-mandate constituency in the Lviv Oblast (province) and thus a seat in the Verkhovna Rada,<sup>[9][10]</sup> the party itself won 0,04% of the votes.<sup>[8]</sup> In 2003 Shkil left the party,<sup>[11]</sup> he has become a close aide to influential politician Yuliya Tymoshenko.<sup>[12][13]</sup>

During Orange Revolution UNA-UNSO members supported Viktor Yushchenko against his pro-Russian opponents. UNA-UNSO members provided security for the supporters of Viktor Yushchenko, and prominent leaders of the Orange camp such as Yulia Tymoshenko on Independence Square in Kiev.<sup>[14]</sup>

In 2005 Yuriy Shukhevych became the leader of the party again. In the 2006 parliamentary elections the party failed to win parliamentary representation with 0,06% of the votes.<sup>[8]</sup> The party did not participate in the 2007 elections.<sup>[8]</sup>

In 2008, the South Ossetian Prosecutor General Teimuraz Khugayev accused UNA-UNSO to have participated with a unit on the Georgian side during the August war. But so far no evidence of this has been provided.<sup>[15]</sup> According to a Russian Investigative Committee report from August, 2009, 200 members of the Ukrainian UNA-UNSO as well as full-time servicemen of the Ukrainian army aided Georgian forces during the fighting; Ukraine denied the accusation. UNA-UNSO deputy head Nikolay Karpyuk said that “unfortunately,” no members of the organization took part in the fighting in Georgia.<sup>[16]</sup>

The party did again participate in the 2012 Ukrainian parliamentary election.<sup>[17]</sup> In these elections the party won 0.08% of the national votes and no constituencies (it had competed in 5 constituencies<sup>[18]</sup>) and thus failed to win parliamentary representation.<sup>[19]</sup>

## International Conflicts

- January Events in Lithuania (Winter 1991)
- 1991 Soviet coup d'état attempt in Moscow (Summer 1991)
- War of Transnistria in Moldova (Spring-Summer 1992)
- War in Abkhazia (1992–1993)
- Chechen War in Russia (1995-1996)
- Kosovo War in Yugoslavia (1998-1999)

### Transnistria

In a War of Transnistria members of UNA-UNSO fought on the side of Transnistrian separatists against Moldovan forces.<sup>[20]</sup> This was justified as a defense of large ethnic Ukrainian minority in Transnistria. Over 50 members of UNSO were awarded order "Defender of Transnistria".

In spring of 1992 700 members of UNSO participated in extinguishing a pro-Russian separatist movement in Crimea. In autumn of 1992 a similar movement was extinguished in Zakarpattia. Concurrently with that UNSO sponsored a return of the Ukrainian veterans from across the Soviet Union.

### Georgia civil war

In 1993 UNA-UNSO sent volunteers to participate in Georgian-Abkhaz conflict in fight against the Abkhasian separatists.<sup>[21][22]</sup> UNA-UNSO fighters formed a unit called "Argo" and joined Georgian side against Russian-backed Abkhaz forces. Some volunteers joined the Sukhumi Battalion of the Marine Infantry Forces of Georgia. A squad of CPT Ustym prevented an amphibious assault of Russian forces near Sukhumi and sank a Russian military motorboat. Seven members of UNSO perished during the conflict near Sukhumi, 30 members were awarded the order of "Vakhtang Gorgasali".

- Sukhumi raid (June 1993)
- Starushkino village ambush (July 15, 1993)
- Shromi village assault (July 17, 1993)
- Khomi defense (October 4, 1993)
- Samtredia defense (October 17, 1993)

## Ideology and image

The party maintains a close relationship with the National Democratic Party of Germany which is considered to be a promoter of a neo-Nazi ideology by some. UNA-UNSO has been widely considered to have employed neo-Fascist and neo-Nazi methods and ideologies.<sup>[23][24][25]</sup>

International security expert Andrew McGregor has stated (in 2006) that the UNA-UNSO *"might be best characterized as an influential fringe movement"*, and that *"its high visibility belies its limited numbers"*.<sup>[3]</sup>

UNA-UNSO has an anthem, which is called 'Stay, my love, don't cry, honey'. It is a remake of the Bella Ciao



The Vakhtang Gorgasal Order, first class

song.<sup>[26]</sup>

## Elections

| Parliamentary since 1994<br>(year links to election page) |         |      |          |
|---|---------|------|----------|
| Year  | Votes   | %    | Mandates |
| <b>1994</b>   | 148,239 | 0.5  | 1        |
| <b>1998</b>   | 105,977 | 0.39 | 0        |
| <b>2002</b>   | 11,839  | 0.04 | 0        |
| <b>2006</b>   | 16,397  | 0.06 | 0        |
| <b>2007</b>   | 0       | 0    | 0        |
| <b>2012</b>   | 16,913  | 0.08 | 0        |

## See also

- St Volodymyr's Cathedral ownership controversy

## References

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- <sup>^</sup> The Makeup of the New Verkhovna Rada / Ukrayinska Pravda (<http://www.pravda.com.ua/en/news/2007/11/5/9329.htm>)
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## External links

- UNA-UNSO Official party web page (<http://www.una-unso.in.ua/>)
- The rise and fall of a radical movement (<http://www.kyivpost.com/news/nation/detail/10046/>) - Kyiv Post (November 8, 2001)

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Categories: Political parties established in 1990 | Political parties in the Soviet Union | Political parties in Ukraine | Politics of Ukraine | Nationalist parties in Ukraine

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