



General Assembly

Distr.: General
8 September 2021

English only

Human Rights Council

Forty-eighth session

13 September–1 October 2021

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by Planetary Association for Clean Energy, Inc., The, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[21 August 2021]

* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



Canada and other NATO members fund neo-Nazis

Belarusian “journalist” Roman Protasevich has made news after being arrested by Belarusian police on 23 May 2021.¹

Sputnik News reported that “The Ryanair plane made an emergency landing due to a bomb threat on 23 May in Minsk, which later turned out to be fake. Belarusian investigators have already opened a probe over the incident.”

Before he entered into the media sphere, Protasevich was a prominent “democracy” activist in Belarus. A sympathetic Ukrainian article on his background explained that:

“Back in 2012, he was detained as an administrator of opposition groups on social networks. Protasevich was then a member of the Young Front, a centre-right, pro-European organization that organized street activities against Lukashenko.”

Young Front is registered in Czechia and is nationalist, anti-communist, and anti-Lukashenko.

Freedom of Information Act research revealed that “Protasevich was part of the Maidan in Kiev 2013/2014, as a picture on Facebook shows, where, clad in a Belarusian People's State flag, he is taking part in the destruction of a Lenin statue.”

Dmytro Yarosh was the head of Right Sector, a neo-Nazi Ukrainian confederation of militias formed in November 2013. Yarosh and Right Sector members later made up the core of the Azov Battalion.

The Western-backed and neo-Nazi-militia-led Maidan coup against Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich was completed in February 2014.

The Canadian embassy in Ukraine helped the coup forces, as opposition protesters, including members of Right Sector, were camped in the Canadian Embassy for a week during the February 2014 rebellion against Yanukovich. “Canada’s embassy in Kyiv was used as a haven for several days by anti-government protesters during the uprising that toppled the government of former president Viktor Yanukovich”, a Canadian Press story noted.

In March 2014, Canada’s International Development Agency initiated an aid programme carried out through Internews Network, costing nearly three million Canadian dollars, called “Strengthening Investigative Reporting in Ukraine”. This initiative financially supported pro-coup “journalists” such as Protasevich in building outlets claiming improvement to the quality of investigative journalism.

The Canadian government eventually contributed over 91 million dollars in “aid” to the Maidan government in Ukraine between March 2014 and March 2016.

In April 2014, the Government of Canada stated “Prime Minister Harper announced that Canada is offering the following capabilities to enhance the readiness of NATO allies: six Royal Canadian Air Force CF-18 fighter aircraft and up to 20 staff officers to the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers in Europe to assist NATO planning efforts.”

In June 2014, Ukraine formally integrated extremist far-right militias, including the Aidar, Dnipro, Donbass, and Azov Battalions that played a crucial role in the Maidan coup, into the National Guard, which is led by the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

On 24 May 2021, University of Ottawa Professor Ivan Katchanovski brought to light Ukrainian media reports revealing that Protasevich had served in the press corps of the neo-Nazi-led Azov Battalion during the war in Donbass. Verified photos show Protasevich appearing in 2015 in “Black Sun”, an official publication of the Azov battalion. The Ukrainian government launched the war in Donbass in April 2014 after Donbass citizens – in a response to the Maidan coup – overwhelmingly voted for independence and subsequently asked to join the Russian Federation, and the war continued until a ceasefire was agreed in September 2014.

¹ References: <http://www.nuremberg2.org/un/references8.pdf>.

Canadian writer Richard Sanders has revealed that the Ukrainian Canadian Congress 2014 Ukrainian festival in Toronto allowed Right Sector Canada, which is the Canadian support arm of Right Sector that made up the core of the Azov Battalion, to raise money to buy military equipment for their fighters in Ukraine. The Canadian national broadcaster CBC showed images of Bandera on Right Sector's festival table. The Canadian government subsidized that year's festival to the tune of \$99,700.

A Global Affairs Canada website describes the Canadian Police Engagement Programme in Ukraine, which started in March 2015:

"Canada has deployed Canadian civilian police officers to Ukraine through the Canadian Police Arrangement (CPA). The CPA supports Ukrainian police reform through police deployments to two missions:

- a bilateral Canada-Ukraine mission
- the European Union Advisory Mission for Civilian Security Sector Reform

Canadian police officers in Ukraine provide strategic advice and training to their Ukrainian counterparts. This advice and training cover topics such as police safety, criminal investigations and preventing and responding to gender-based violence."

In April 2015, Stephen Harper's government initiated Operation UNIFIER, under which the Canadian Armed Forces supplied the Ukrainian military and paramilitary police units with training and weapons.

In March 2015, Conservative party members of parliament attended a fundraising dinner for Army SOS, which raised CAD\$52,000 for Ukrainian troops such as the Azov Battalion. Army SOS claimed to have raised more than CAD\$1 million, fundraising that was enabled by the Canadian government.

Canadians went to Ukraine to fight with Ukrainian militias and were able to return home without facing charges under the Foreign Enlistment Act, which was originally created to prevent Canadians from helping fight fascist Spanish General Franco's coup attempt against the republican government in the mid-1930s.

On 26 May 2021, footage obtained by independent photographer Dean O'Brien showed that Protasevich had served as a soldier in the Azov Battalion during, and for several months after, the war in Donbass.

Writer Ben Norton cited a (US-funded regime-change news outlet) Radio Free Liberty/Europe article in which Protasevich had revealed that in September 2015 he was still serving with the Azov Battalion.

This indicates that the Canadian Armed Forces trained the so-called journalist Protasevich while providing weapons to the Azov Battalion in which he served.

Protasevich had returned to Belarus by May 22, 2016, leaving him having been in close contact with the CAF for up to eight months.

Weapons from Operation UNIFIER have consistently reached neo-Nazi militias such as the Azov Battalion.

These militias have been accused of committing war crimes on multiple occasions and are also associated with a lethal wave of anti-Roma pogroms that swept through Ukraine in spring 2018. The two gangs behind the attacks, C14 and the National Druzhina, which is a part of Igor Kolomoisky's Azov Battalion, proudly posted pogrom videos on social media.

During a wave of anti-Lukashenko protests in 2017, Protasevich appeared with neo-Nazis on multiple occasions, including at book burnings.

In December 2017, Protasevich moved to Prague, Czech Republic after being arrested for hooliganism and began to formally integrate into the imperialist media sphere.

Protasevich was a 2017-18 Vaclav Havel Journalism fellow in Prague, working for Radio Free Liberty/Europe.

Four months after a week-long tour of the US State Department in April 2018, Protasevich began working for USAID-funded European Radio for Belarus on 31 August 2018.

From March 2020, he became Editor-in-Chief of Nexta, a foreign-funded Telegram messaging channel covering Belarusian news and located in Poland.

Stepan Putila, Protasevich's partner at Nexta, worked for many years at Belsat, which has been funded by the Polish Foreign Ministry since 2007.

Together with regime-change organization National Endowment for Democracy-funded activists in Belarus, Nexta played a key role in organizing pro-coup demonstrations in Belarus to protest against the election loss of Western-supported candidate Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, who garnered only 11 per cent of the vote, yet falsely claimed that the election had been rigged in Lukashenko's favour.

The Confederation of Independent States' election observation mission found no evidence of fraud in the Belarusian election.

Belarus has long been a Western target for a coup d'état. Belarusian leader Alexander Lukashenko is a socialist who has enjoyed the support of the Communist Party of Belarus since its founding in 1996. Belarus has refused to join NATO and has condemned its attempts to interfere in the country.

The mainstream media is contradictory in its coverage: it expresses concern for Protasevich, yet expressed no concern in 2013, when former Bolivian President Evo Morales' aeroplane was intercepted in Austria and banned from flying in French and Portuguese airspace on the orders of the government of the United States of America, which believed that NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden was on board.

An aeroplane close to Belarusian airspace had even previously been targeted by the Ukrainian military:

"In 2016, 50 km before the Belarusian border, Ukraine threatened to use military fighters against a civilian carrier, to turn the passenger plane around and land it in Kiev. After the landing, one passenger was removed from the aircraft by the Ukrainian SBU".

That passenger was an anti-Maidan coup activist.

FOIA Research reveals that Protasevich's "presence in Greece roughly coincided with a visit of the Western-backed coup leader in exile, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, with the President of Greece, Katerina Sakellariopoulou, and US Ambassador to Greece, Geoffrey Pyatt. According to Protasevich's Twitter account, during Tsikhanouskaya's stay in Athens he worked as her photographer, and took pictures of her in different settings."

Protasevich is likely to face charges for extremism since Nexta has been declared an extremist outlet by a Belarusian court. He can legitimately be described as a subversive counter-revolutionary seeking to bring down the Belarusian government and is likely to pay the price for his actions.
