



The Law Society of
Upper Canada | Barreau
du Haut-Canada

May 6, 2016

President Petro Poroshenko
Presidential Administration of Ukraine
11 Bankova Street
Kyiv, Ukraine 01220

Office of the Treasurer

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Your Excellency:

Re: Murder of Lawyer Yuri Grabovski

I write on behalf of the Law Society of Upper Canada to voice our grave concern over the murder of lawyer Yuri Grabovski. When serious issues of apparent injustice to lawyers and the judiciary come to our attention, we speak out.

Yuri Grabovski was a Ukrainian human rights lawyer defending an alleged Russian intelligence officer captured in eastern Ukraine. Yuri Grabovski disappeared on 6 March 2016 while returning to Kiev from a business meeting in Odessa. On 20 March 2016, Anatoly V. Matios, Chief Military Prosecutor of Ukraine, disclosed that a suspect in Yuri Grabovski's disappearance had been apprehended. Yuri Grabovski's body was found on 25 March 2016 over 100 kilometres south of Kiev. The suspect had reportedly revealed its location to the police. Anatoly Matios confirmed that the victim "was killed in a violent way and finished off with a firearm." Since then, another suspect has been apprehended by the police.

The Law Society presently writes to voice its deep concern for the safety of lawyers in Ukraine. Yuri Grabovski's murder is the second killing of a lawyer in Ukraine this month and the fourth since January 2015.

The Law Society of Upper Canada urges Your Excellency to comply with Articles 16 and 23 of the United Nations' *Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers*.

Article 16 states:

Governments shall ensure that lawyers (a) are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference; (b) are able to travel and to consult with their clients freely both within their own country and abroad; and (c) shall not suffer, or be threatened with, prosecution or administrative, economic or other sanctions for any action taken in

accordance with recognized professional duties, standards and ethics.

Moreover, Article 23 states:

Lawyers like other citizens are entitled to freedom of expression, belief, association and assembly. In particular, they shall have the right to take part in public discussion of matters concerning the law, the administration of justice and the promotion and protection of human rights and to join or form local, national or international organizations and attend their meetings, without suffering professional restrictions by reason of their lawful action or their membership in a lawful organization.

The Law Society urges the government of Ukraine to:

- a. ensure that a thorough, impartial, independent and fair investigation is conducted into the murder of Yuri Grabovski;
- b. ensure that all lawyers can carry out their peaceful and legitimate activities without fear of physical violence or other human rights violations; and
- c. ensure in all circumstances respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with international human rights standards and international instruments.

Yours very truly,

Janet E. Minor
Treasurer

**The Law Society of Upper Canada is the governing body for more than 49,000 lawyers and 7,800 paralegals in the province of Ontario, Canada. The Treasurer is the head of the Law Society.*

The mandate of the Law Society is to govern the legal profession in the public interest by upholding the independence, integrity and honour of the legal profession for the purpose of advancing the cause of justice and the rule of law.

cc:

H.E. Mr. Andriy Shevchenko

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Alex Neve, Secretary General, Amnesty International Canada

Mary Lawlor, Executive Director, Front Line Defenders

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Adrie van de Streek, Executive Director, Lawyers for Lawyers

David F. Sutherland, Chair, Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada

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Michel Forst, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders,
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Gabriela Knaul, Special Rapporteur of the Human Council on the independence
of judges and lawyers, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for
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Sarah Smith, Human Rights and Rule of Law Policy Adviser, The Law Society of
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