

# People Took to the Streets to Defend Their Rights and Freedoms

February 24, 2014

**\*\*Update, March 12, 2014:** A reader pointed out that we incorrectly described this as a statement from “the Ukrainian labor movement”; in fact, it is a statement from one conservative component of the labor movement, one that likes to see itself as speaking for all of Ukrainian labor. (For some background, see Oleh Vernick, “‘All-Ukrainian Strike’ as the big fake of Euromaidan,” LeftEast, March 5, 2014.) We regret the error. Nevertheless, the statement highlights some important issues.—Eds.\*\*

*While this statement was published a week ago, on February 19, we think it important to call it to the attention of our readers as a statement of the Ukrainian labor movement. – Dan La Botz*

Thousands of peaceful demonstrators yesterday at the Verkhovna Rada were provoked by the riot police followed by violent clashes between the protesters and the police.

Open warfare broke out on the streets of Kyiv yesterday, with at least 25 persons reportedly killed and more than 1,500 people injured. It was a day of non-stop bloodletting, smoke, fire and screeching ambulances.

The death toll was likely to rise as police went on the offensive after sundown, advancing on thousands of protesters on Independence Square in the evening with gunshots, a water cannon and an armored personnel carrier. Tents housing protesters were burning on the main square, a fire fueled by protesters with tires as a defense against police attacks.

Many buses, trains cars are stopped by road police today on approach to Kyiv, preventing people from the regions to support protesters.

The Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine (KVPU) is deeply concerned with the critical situation which may further result in chaos and blood. Three months of protests against the current government have resulted in nothing but mass bloodshed and deaths. The government and the President don't show any reaction and don't take into notice the demands of the protesting people in entire Ukraine.

The KVPU condemns the evil actions of the government and special police forces and calls upon the international community to immediately impose sanctions for the high officials who are involved into the bloodshed as well as consider the possibility of providing humanitarian assistance to those who defend democracy and human rights values.

Sincerely,

Mikhailo Volynets

Head of the KVPU