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Statement by the Prime Minister of Canada marking important anniversary in Ukraine's struggle for democracy

Statement

Ottawa, Ontario - 27 February 2015

Prime Minister Stephen Harper today issued the following statement marking an important anniversary in Ukraine's struggle for peace, democracy and freedom:

“On this day in 2014, following months of protests, the Ukrainian people welcomed a new government after courageously shedding the corrupt Yanukovich regime.

“In doing so, the citizens of Ukraine chose democracy and a future with Europe. Today, we salute the brave demonstrators who were instrumental in this democratic revolution, including the ‘Heavenly Hundred’ who gave their lives in the hopes that their country could be free.

“We applaud the significant progress that Ukraine has made over the last year towards a democratic and prosperous future, including the holding of successful presidential and parliamentary elections and the completion of an historic association agreement with the European Union. We encourage Ukraine to continue its momentum towards meaningful reforms in areas such as anti-corruption, rule of law, and democracy.

“Canada has played a proud part in supporting Ukraine’s transition to freedom and democracy, including significant contributions to economic and governance reforms, stability loans and humanitarian and non-lethal military assistance, as well as providing hundreds of electoral observers.

“Ukraine’s progress over the last year has taken place against the tragic backdrop of the Putin regime’s aggression. Canada remains steadfast in its commitment to the people of Ukraine in the face of this aggression, which has cost the lives of more than 5,600 people.

“Our position has been clear since the outset: we recognize the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and will never recognize the illegal Russian occupation of any part of that country.

“Our Government has backed up our words with actions. We have imposed sanctions against over 270 Russian and Ukrainian individuals and entities, delivered non-lethal military equipment to the Ukrainian government and provided support through NATO to build up the Ukrainian Armed Forces.

“The cost to Russia will continue to rise if it persists in escalating the conflict and refuses to allow a peaceful resolution.

“As we mark this important anniversary in Ukraine, Canada re-commits to standing firmly with Ukrainian citizens as we have done since the beginning of the crisis. We strongly believe that peace, democracy and freedom will prevail and we will work with the brave people of Ukraine and with our partners to ensure that it does.”

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