UKRAINIAN ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

Date: 23 November 2026

Ref. 23/11/2026-01

TO:
The Honourable Speaker
National Assembly
Parliament of the Republic of South Africa
Cape Town, South Africa

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF SOUTH AFRICA TO RECOGNISE THE HOLODOMOR OF 1932–1933 AS GENOCIDE AGAINST THE UKRAINIAN PEOPLE

Honourable Speaker,
Honourable Members of the National Assembly,

On behalf of the **Ukrainian Association of South Africa (UAZA), NPO 189-705,** and the Ukrainian community in South Africa, we respectfully request that the National Assembly of the Republic of South Africa formally recognise the **Holodomor of 1932–1933 as an act of genocide against the Ukrainian people perpetrated by the Soviet totalitarian regime**.

Remembering the victims

The word *Holodomor*, derived from Ukrainian words meaning "death by hunger", refers to the catastrophic man-made famine of 1932–1933.

The Holodomor occurred in the context of Stalin's forced collectivisation and broader Soviet repression of Ukraine. The policy of repression directed at Ukrainian farmers resulted in the situation when grain and other foodstuffs were confiscated, punitive measures were imposed on communities, and Ukrainians were subjected to policies that resulted in the deaths of millions.

For over 60 years, knowledge of this tragedy was censored and any attempts to speak about it – criminalised. Today, remembrance of the Holodomor is fundamentally about **honouring its victims, preserving historical truth and ensuring that future generations understand the devastating consequences of policies that deprive people of their most basic human rights.**

International recognition

Recognition of the Holodomor as genocide has grown considerably internationally. It has been formally recognised as genocide by numerous national parliaments and international institutions

across Europe, North America and Latin America, while further states have adopted resolutions condemning and commemorating the crime.

The **European Parliament recognized the Holodomor as genocide in December 2022**, while the **Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe recognized it as an act of genocide in October 2023**. The full list of countries **recognising the Holodomor as genocide is provided in Annexure B.**

Despite this growing international recognition, **no African country appears among the states that have formally recognized the Holodomor as genocide**.

South Africa therefore has a historic opportunity to **become the first country on the African continent to recognize the Holodomor as genocide**.

Why South Africa's recognition matters

South Africa's own history has given its people a profound understanding of the importance of **acknowledging historical injustice, preserving memory and truth, and recognising the dignity of those who suffered under systems of oppression**.

South Africa has also demonstrated that remembrance of historical injustice is about recognising the suffering of victims, learning from history and strengthening our shared commitment to human dignity.

Recognition of the Holodomor would therefore be first and foremost an **act of remembrance and historical justice**.

It would send a powerful message that the victims of mass atrocities deserve to be remembered regardless of their nationality, geography or historical period.

It would also carry particular significance beyond South Africa's borders and give South Africa the opportunity to demonstrate leadership on the African continent by becoming **the first African country to recognise the Holodomor as genocide**.

Continuing a South African initiative begun in 2017

This appeal also continues the work undertaken by the Ukrainian community in South Africa almost a decade ago.

In **2017**, UAZA launched an appeal requesting the National Assembly to recognise the orchestrated famine of 1932–1933 as genocide against the Ukrainian people and a crime against humanity. The 2017 UAZA Holodomor Petition also called upon Parliament to condemn attempts to deny or misrepresent the facts of the Holodomor. [uaza.co.za]

Today, we respectfully renew this request.

International understanding and recognition of the Holodomor have advanced significantly since our earlier appeal, and we believe that the time has come for South Africa to add its voice.

Our request to Parliament

We therefore respectfully request that the **National Assembly of the Republic of South Africa**:

1. **recognise the Holodomor of 1932–1933 as an act of genocide against the Ukrainian people;**
2. **honour the memory of the millions of victims of the Holodomor;**
3. **support the preservation of historical truth concerning the Holodomor;** and
4. **encourage greater awareness and education about the Holodomor and other crimes committed by totalitarian regimes.**

Such recognition would not be directed against any country or people today.

Rather, it would affirm a universal principle: **victims of genocide and mass atrocities deserve to be remembered, their suffering deserves acknowledgement, and historical truth should be preserved for future generations.**

South Africa now has an opportunity to take a historic step and become **the first African nation to formally recognise the Holodomor as genocide**.

For the Ukrainian community of South Africa, such recognition would carry profound meaning. It would demonstrate that, even generations later and thousands of kilometres away, the lives lost in one of the great tragedies of the twentieth century have not been forgotten.

We respectfully ask the National Assembly to consider this request.

In remembering the Holodomor, we honour its victims and reaffirm our common commitment to human dignity, historical truth and the prevention of future atrocities.

Respectfully,



Oksana Lissi
President
Ukrainian Association of South Africa (UAZA)

ANNEXURE A

Historical and Evidentiary Basis for Recognition of the Holodomor of 1932–1933 as Genocide Against the Ukrainian People

1. Purpose

This annexure summarises the historical, documentary and legal evidence supporting the request that the **National Assembly of the Republic of South Africa** recognise the **Holodomor of 1932–1933 as genocide against the Ukrainian people**.

The evidence is drawn from Soviet-era documents and archives, demographic research, eyewitness testimony, international legal principles and findings of international institutions.

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2. Historical background

The Holodomor, a Ukrainian term meaning **"death by hunger,"** refers to the catastrophic man-made famine that devastated Ukraine in 1932–1933.

It occurred during Stalin's policy of forced collectivisation and intensified grain procurement. and was the result of deliberate policies enforced by the Communist Party and Soviet authorities under Josef Stalin.

Holodomor's origins lie in the 1928 collectivisation policy, which nationalised private farms and transformed them into state-owned collectives. In Ukraine, peasants, unwilling to join the collective farms, staged over 4,000 protests [*according to the Soviet secret police (OGPU)*] . By 1932, fearing the loss of control over Ukraine [Stalin's letter to Lazar Kaganovich 11 August 1932. Primary document confirming Stalin's fear of losing Ukraine], Stalin intensified repression. **Ukrainian intellectuals and nationally oriented political figures were persecuted, and over 50,000 farming families were sent to labour camps in Siberia.**

In December 1932, despite reports of widespread starvation, Stalin demanded the extraction from Ukraine of 4.2 million tonnes of food, a plan that had to be "performed fully and unquestionably, at all costs". Peasants who sought food elsewhere were legally forbidden to leave their settlements under the 22 January 1933 decree. [*Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) and Council of People's Commissars of the USSR. "Directive on Preventing the Mass Departure of Starving Peasants." 22 January 1933*] The decree also allowed on-the-spot shooting of those who pick up the remaining stalks after harvest collection.

Ukrainian villages that failed to meet Soviet grain procurement quotas were placed on "black boards", facing collective punishment through food confiscation, trade bans and the withdrawal of supplies, which further intensified mass starvation. *[Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party*

(Bolsheviks) of Ukraine and the Council of People's Commissars of the Ukrainian SSR, 6 December 1932, On Blacklisting Villages that Maliciously Sabotage Grain Procurements.] Thus, thousands of farms, villages and even whole towns were placed on blacklists and cut off from access to food. Offers of aid from the Ukrainian diaspora were rejected, and grain exports from Ukraine continued throughout the famine's worst months, funding Stalin's industrialisation programme.

Police units and Communist Party functionaries searched homes and seized everything edible — from grain and preserved fruit to potato peelings. **After millions died, the Soviet regime resettled Russian peasants from other parts of the USSR into the depopulated Ukrainian villages, entrenching the demographic and cultural consequences of the Holodomor.** Rural communities lost control over agricultural production and were subjected to quotas, searches, confiscations and punitive measures.

The European Parliament found that grain was deliberately confiscated and borders were sealed to prevent Ukrainians from escaping starvation. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe also documented confiscation of food and seed grain and measures preventing inhabitants of affected communities from leaving. [eur-lex.europa.eu], [pace.coe.int]

Contemporary Soviet documents, including internal correspondence, procurement resolutions and reports of deteriorating conditions, are available through the Holodomor Research and Education Consortium.

Key Soviet Documents: Holodomor Research and Education Consortium [holodomor.ca]

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3. Knowledge of starvation and continuing enforcement

Archival evidence demonstrates that authorities received reports of severe hunger, rising mortality and the deteriorating conditions in Ukrainian villages while coercive policies continued.

Research based on archival documents shows that authorities collected regular information on mortality in affected rural areas. The continued implementation of procurement and punitive measures despite knowledge of mass starvation forms an important part of the historical assessment of intent. [eehb.dspu.edu.ua]

More than **1,000 surviving archival criminal cases** relating to the Holodomor period have also been digitised, providing evidence of famine conditions, repression and the operation of the administrative system at local level. [

Holodomor archival documents [mvs.gov.ua]

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4. Scale of human loss

The exact number of victims cannot be established with absolute precision because records were incomplete, suppressed or destroyed.

A peer-reviewed demographic study estimated approximately **3.9 million excess deaths in Ukraine and approximately 600,000 lost births**, resulting in total direct and indirect demographic losses of approximately **4.5 million** during 1932–1934. However, this is not a definitive figure. The figure of **10.5 million** was published by the Ukrainian Holodomor museum in 2021 based on the results of comprehensive expert assessments. It covered both Ukraine and areas of the USSR where Ukrainians lived in significant concentrations. The impact was particularly severe in rural Ukraine. [researchgate.net]

Because the Soviet authorities concealed the crime, it is impossible to establish the exact number of victims.

For this reason, UAZA uses the historically cautious formulation that between **4 to 9 million of Ukrainians died as a result of the Holodomor**.

Demographic study of the 1932–1933 famine [researchgate.net]

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5. Wider suppression of Ukrainian national and cultural life

The famine occurred within a broader period of repression affecting Ukrainian intellectual, cultural and social life.

The European Parliament concluded that the famine was implemented not only in connection with forced collectivisation but also to suppress the Ukrainian people and their national identity. It noted that this period included repression against those who represented Ukrainian cultural identity. [eur-lex.europa.eu]

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe similarly notes that the famine was preceded by repression against Ukrainian intellectual elites. [pace.coe.int]

This wider context is relevant to the assessment of the Holodomor as an attack not merely on individual farmers but on a substantial part of the Ukrainian national community.

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6. Concealment and historical evidence

For decades, public discussion of the famine was suppressed and access to relevant archives restricted. The Library of Congress records that survivors often remained silent for fear of reprisals, scholars were prevented from freely researching the famine, and access to government archives was restricted.

Following greater archival access, historians have been able to examine Soviet government documents alongside diplomatic reports, eyewitness accounts, survivor testimony and demographic evidence.

A substantial collection of this material is available in the Holodomor Reader: A Sourcebook on the Famine of 1932–1933 in Ukraine.

Holodomor Reader and primary-source materials [holodomor.ca]

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7. Raphael Lemkin and the concept of genocide

Raphael Lemkin, the jurist who coined the term **"genocide"** and played a foundational role in developing the international legal concept, specifically examined the Ukrainian case.

In his 1953 work Soviet Genocide in Ukraine, Lemkin viewed the famine within a broader attack on Ukrainian national life, encompassing the intelligentsia, religious institutions, rural population and national culture.

His assessment is particularly significant because it applied the emerging concept of genocide to the Ukrainian experience only two decades after the Holodomor.

[Raphael Lemkin, Soviet Genocide in Ukraine](https://holodomormuseum.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Lemkin.pdf) [holodomorm...eum.org.ua]

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8. International legal basis

Article II of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide defines genocide as specified acts committed **with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group**.

Those acts include *"deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part."*

United Nations Genocide Convention [un.org]

The historical evidence relevant to this assessment includes the confiscation of food and seed grain, punitive measures against communities, restrictions on movement, continuation of these measures despite knowledge of mass starvation and the simultaneous repression of Ukrainian national and cultural life.

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9. International recognition

On **15 December 2022**, the European Parliament formally recognised the Holodomor as genocide against the Ukrainian people. Its resolution was adopted by **507 votes in favour, 12 against and 17 abstentions**.

European Parliament resolution on the Holodomor [europarl.europa.eu]

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has likewise recognised the Holodomor as genocide, following historical and legal consideration of the evidence.

PACE historical and legal assessment [pace.coe.int]

A full list of countries that have formally recognised the Holodomor as genocide is provided in Annexure B.

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10. Conclusion

The historical record demonstrates a combination of state measures that created and maintained catastrophic conditions in Ukraine:

- forced collectivisation and food confiscation;
- punitive measures against rural communities;
- restrictions preventing starving people from seeking food elsewhere;
- continuation of coercive policies despite knowledge of mass starvation;
- repression affecting Ukrainian cultural and national life; and
- decades of concealment and denial.

Taken together, these facts provide the historical basis upon which numerous states and international institutions have recognised the **Holodomor of 1932–1933 as genocide against the Ukrainian people**.

Recognition by the **National Assembly of the Republic of South Africa** would be an act of **historical remembrance and respect for the victims**, consistent with the principles embodied in the United Nations Genocide Convention.

It would acknowledge a documented historical crime committed by a totalitarian regime and affirm a universal principle: **victims of genocide deserve recognition, and their suffering should not be forgotten.**

Key evidence and reference links

1. United Nations Genocide Convention [un.org]
2. European Parliament Resolution on the Holodomor [eur-lex.europa.eu]
3. PACE historical and legal assessment [pace.coe.int]
4. Key Soviet documents: HREC [holodomor.ca]
5. Holodomor Reader and primary sources [holodomor.ca]
6. Law Library of Congress: Soviet legal acts relating to the 1932–33 starvation [loc.gov]
7. [Raphael Lemkin: Soviet Genocide in Ukraine](https://holodomormuseum.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Lemkin.pdf) [holodomorm...eum.org.ua]
8. Archival documents relating to the Holodomor [mvs.gov.ua]
9. Holodomor: Stalin's Secret Genocide (2016)
   Documentary featuring historians including Anne Applebaum, Serhii Plokhy, Timothy Snyder, Norman Naimark, Andrea Graziosi, Alexander Motyl and Frank Sysyn. [youtube.com]
10. Harvest of Despair. [Youtube.com] A documentary dedicated to the man-made famine in Ukraine in 1932–1933.

ANNEXURE B

International Recognition of the Holodomor of 1932–1933

The Holodomor has received extensive recognition by national parliaments and international institutions.

The list below is based on the National Museum of the Holodomor's register of international recognition. [holodomorm...eum.org.ua]

Countries and other national-level authorities

No.	Country / authority	Year	Nature of recognition
1	**Estonia**	1993	Parliament condemned the Communist policy of **genocide in Ukraine** and commemorated the victims.

2	**Australia**	1993	Senate resolution described the man-made famine as one of the most horrific manifestations of **genocide**.
3	**Canada**	2003	Senate called for recognition of the Ukrainian Famine/Genocide of 1932–33 and described it as **genocide**.
4	**Hungary**	2003	National Assembly commemorated the victims of the **genocide in Ukraine**.
5	**Vatican / Holy See**	2004	Included the genocide perpetrated against Ukrainians among the genocides of the twentieth century.
6	**Lithuania**	2005	Parliament recognised the Holodomor as a deliberately planned **genocide against the Ukrainian people**.
7	**Georgia**	2005	Parliament recognised the events of 1932–33 as deliberate **genocide against the Ukrainian people**.
8	**Poland**	2006	Senate supported recognition of the Great Famine of 1932–33 as an act of **genocide**.
9	**Peru**	2007	Congress recognised the Holodomor as an act of **genocide**.
10	**Paraguay**	2007	Senate condemned the Holodomor as **genocide against the Ukrainian people**.
11	**Ecuador**	2007	National Congress recognised the Holodomor as an act of **genocide**.
12	**Colombia**	2007	House of Representatives adopted a resolution condemning the **genocide** of Ukrainians in 1932–33.
13	**Mexico**	2008	Chamber of Deputies recognised the Holodomor as an act of **genocide**.
14	**Latvia**	2008	Parliament recognised the Holodomor as a deliberate act of **genocide against the Ukrainian people**.
15	**Portugal**	2017	Parliament recognised the Holodomor as **genocide** and condemned totalitarianism and crimes against humanity.

16	**United States of America**	2018	US Senate resolution affirmed the conclusions of the US Commission on the Ukraine Famine, which found that Stalin and his entourage committed **genocide against Ukrainians**.
17	**Czech Republic**	2022	Both chambers of Parliament recognised the Holodomor as **genocide against the Ukrainian people**.
18	**Brazil**	2022	Federal Senate recognised the Holodomor as an act of **genocide against the Ukrainian people**.
19	**Romania**	2022	Parliament condemned the deliberate starvation as a **crime against the Ukrainian people and against humanity**. The Museum lists Romania at national level, but the cited wording is not an explicit genocide recognition.
20	**Ireland**	2022	Upper House of Parliament recognised the Holodomor as an act of **genocide against the Ukrainian people**.
21	**Moldova**	2022	Parliament recognised the Holodomor as an act of **genocide against the Ukrainian people**.
22	**Germany**	2022	Bundestag recognised the historical and political classification of the Holodomor as **genocide**.
23	**Austria**	2022	National Council described the Holodomor as a **"horrific crime"** committed by the Stalinist regime. The Museum lists Austria at national level, but the cited wording does not explicitly classify it as genocide.
24	**Chile**	2022	Chamber of Deputies recognised the Holodomor as **genocide and a crime against human dignity**.
25	**Bulgaria**	2023	National Assembly recognised the Holodomor as **genocide**.
26	**Belgium**	2023	Parliament adopted a resolution recognising the Holodomor as **genocide against the Ukrainian people**.
27	**Iceland**	2023	Althing recognised the Holodomor as **genocide against the Ukrainian people**.

28	**France**	2023	French Senate recognised the Holodomor as **genocide against the Ukrainian people**.
29	**Slovenia**	2023	National Assembly recognised the Holodomor as **genocide against the Ukrainian people**.
30	**United Kingdom**	2023	House of Commons recognised the Holodomor as **genocide against the Ukrainian people**.
31	**Luxembourg**	2023	Chamber of Deputies recognised the Holodomor as **genocide against the Ukrainian people**.
32	**Slovakia**	2023	National Council recognised the Holodomor as **genocide against the Ukrainian people**.
33	**Croatia**	2023	Parliament recognised the Holodomor as **genocide against the Ukrainian people**.
34	**Netherlands**	2023	House of Representatives recognised the Holodomor as **genocide against the Ukrainian people**.
35	**Italy**	2023	Italian Senate recognised the Holodomor as **genocide against the Ukrainian people**.
36	**Switzerland**	2024	Swiss National Council recognised the Holodomor as **genocide against the Ukrainian people**.