

Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Date: 23 February 2024
Subject: Commemoration of the Ukrainian Holodomor
Report of: Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester

Purpose of Report

This report asks GMCA members to recognise the 1932-33 Holodomor as a genocide of the Ukrainian people and to endorse the statement in part 2 of the report, at the request of the GM Ukrainian Community.

Recommendations:

The GMCA is requested to:

1. Note the contents of the report.
2. Endorse the statement included in section 2.

Contact Officers

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Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

There are no sustainability or equalities impacts related to this report.

Risk Management

N/A

Legal Considerations

There are no legal implications in this report.

Financial Consequences – Revenue

N/A

Financial Consequences – Capital

N/A

Number of attachments to the report:

None

Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee

N/A

Background Papers

None

Tracking/ Process

Does this report relate to a major strategic decision, as set out in the GMCA Constitution.

No

Exemption from call in

Are there any aspects in this report which means it should be considered to be exempt from call in by the relevant Scrutiny Committee on the grounds of urgency?

N/A

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

N/A

1. Introduction/Background

The Holodomor

1. The 4th Saturday of November is Ukraine Holodomor remembrance day, a day that honours the millions of Ukrainian people that died as the result of a famine which resulted from a Soviet programme of forced agricultural collectivisation launched by Soviet leader Joseph Stalin in 1932. The Holodomor means literally “death by starvation”.
2. The primary victims of the Holodomor were rural farmers and villagers, who made up 80 percent of Ukraine's population in the 1930s. While it is impossible to determine the precise number of victims of the Ukrainian Holodomor, it is estimated that between 3.5 million to 7 million people lost their lives (with some estimates going higher).
3. Under the plan for agricultural collectivisation, individually owned farms were replaced by state run collectives. Ukrainian farmers largely resisted the policy and as a result, soviet officials forced many off their land, seized property and confiscated produce. Many were prevented from leaving the Ukraine in search of food and Soviet authorities blocked food supplies into the area.
4. Starvation soon spread among the rural Ukraine. At the height of the Holodomor in June of 1933, it is estimated that Ukrainians were dying at a rate of 28,000 people per day. The Kremlin denied there was any humanitarian crisis and refused any international aid¹.
5. Meanwhile, Soviet records suggest that 4.27 million tons of grain from Ukraine were extracted by the Soviet Union in 1932, enough to feed at least 12 million people for an entire year.
6. The longstanding position of successive British governments is that genocide recognition is a matter for competent courts, as opposed to governments or non-judicial bodies. The UK therefore only recognises the following as genocide, as determined by international courts: the Holocaust (World War II), Srebrenica (1995) and Rwanda (1994). Whilst recognising the Holodomor as “*an appalling tragedy and an important*

¹ [Holodomor Research and Education consortium, University of Alberta](#)

part of the history of Ukraine and Europe” ² the government has confirmed that it has no plans to recognise these events as genocide.

Recognising Holodomor across the world

7. Twenty-three UN countries, the Vatican city as well as the Catholic and Orthodox Churches have recognised the Holodomor as genocide. The Welsh Government and many global cities and regions have called the Holodomor a genocide or have made a commitment to remember the Holodomor Victims with a Remembrance Day in November. Some of those cities and regions includes Washington D.C (US), Rome (IT), Rio de Janeiro (BR), the Federation of Municipalities of Catalonia (SP), Tarragona (SP), Valencian Community (SP), Sicily (IT), Braga (PR) and several US and Canadian States³.
8. Institutions including the European Parliament and the United Nations have issued statements naming Holodomor a tragedy or crime against humanity but have not used the word “genocide”.

Why the GMCA should remember the Holodomor

9. Greater Manchester has a large and vibrant Ukrainian community who are proud of their heritage and cultural roots. The community has grown in recent months due to the Ukrainians that have come to GM to seek refuge from the war.
10. The Ukrainian Cultural Centre has been the nucleus of the Ukrainian Community in the region for over 60 years, promoting Ukrainian culture, education and traditions. It is run by the Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain, its chair Petro Rewko, a Mancunian himself, has become a strong voice of the community in the UK since the war, a role that was recognised in the 2023 King’s New Year Honours.
11. The Ukrainian community would like the region to join them in remembering the millions of Ukrainians that lost their lives due to the Holodomor.

² [Recognition of Genocide - Hansard - UK Parliament](#)

³ [Holodomor Museum](#)

12. The GMCA is therefore asked to endorse the following statement that has been developed in collaboration with members of the Ukrainian community in Greater Manchester.

2. GMCA Statement

2022-23 marked the 90th anniversary of the Ukrainian man-made famine in 1932-33 known as the Holodomor.

The GMCA endorses the following statement:

- The Holodomor was an act of genocide against Ukrainians in 1932-33.
- The GMCA recognises the 4th Saturday of November as a day of remembrance for the innocent victims of the Holodomor.