

STATEMENT
of the Ukrainian National Committee of the International Council on Monuments
and Sites (ICOMOS UA) on the Continued and Growing Threat to Cultural
Heritage Sites on the Territory of Ukraine from the Armed Aggression
of the russian federation

On the International Day for Monuments and Sites, 18 April 2025, the Ukrainian National Committee of ICOMOS stresses that despite the heroic resistance of the Ukrainian nation against the military aggression of the russian federation and the international support and efforts to achieve a just and lasting peace in Europe, the threat of destruction of World Heritage sites on the territory of Ukraine is growing.

The aggravation of the situation regarding the preservation of World Heritage sites on the territory of Ukraine forces us to recall that the Parties to the International Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage and the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict once recognised that the cultural heritage of Ukraine belongs to all mankind and that the international community must cooperate and create conditions for the collective preservation of monuments.

In the context of the prolonged and relentless escalation of the armed aggression of the russian federation against Ukraine, the situation in the field of protection of cultural heritage in the areas of hostilities, in the temporarily occupied territories and throughout the entire territory of Ukraine without exception remains threatening, in particular as regards the state of preservation of World Heritage sites.

All Ukrainian territories are systematically subjected to rocket attacks by military units of the Russian Federation. Such actions of the aggressor pose a threat to the preservation of Ukrainian monuments, including those included in the UNESCO World Heritage List, namely "Saint-Sophia Cathedral and Related Monastic Buildings, Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra", "Lviv - the Ensemble of the Historic Centre", "The Historic Centre of Odesa", "Struve Geodetic Arc" in Odesa and Khmelnytskyi regions, "Residence of Bukovinian and Dalmatian Metropolitans" in Chernivtsi, "Wooden Tserkvas of the Carpathian Region in Poland and Ukraine" in Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk and Zakarpattia regions.

ICOMOS, UNESCO, numerous charitable foundations and the international community have provided (and continue to provide) substantial assistance to Ukraine since the first days of the war to protect monuments, record them, support and train

specialists. In 2023-2024, 25 World Heritage Sites and Sites on the Tentative List were included in the UNESCO List of Cultural Property under Enhanced Protection, and the sites "Saint-Sophia Cathedral and Related Monastic Buildings, Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra", "Lviv - the Ensemble of the Historic Centre", "The Historic Centre of Odesa" were included by UNESCO in the List of World Heritage in Danger.

As of today, the historical centers of the cities of Chernihiv, Kyiv and Lviv are under great threat from air attacks. The historic centres of the cities of Kharkiv, Dnipro, Zaporizhia, Sumy, Kherson, located several dozen kilometres from the line of attack of the russian troops, are subjected to constant russian shelling and destruction.

Barbaric rocket and artillery shelling, drone attacks not only claim the lives of many Ukrainian civilians, but also destroy numerous monuments of cultural heritage. The historical centres of Mariupol, Vovchansk, Bakhmut, Lysychansk, Kupyansk have been completely destroyed, more than 1,400 monuments have been destroyed or damaged throughout Ukraine. These are irreparable losses, not only for Ukrainian history and culture, but for the whole of human civilisation, which is now in the sights of russian missiles.

Therefore, on this International Day for Monuments and Sites, the Ukrainian National Committee of ICOMOS appeals to the world community to unite all efforts to protect the cultural heritage of Ukraine and asks for your support to Ukraine in its fight against russian military aggression.

Bureau of the Ukrainian National Committee
of the International Council on Monuments and Sites
(ICOMOS UA)

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