



УКРАЇНСЬКИЙ НАЦІОНАЛЬНИЙ КОМІТЕТ МІЖНАРОДНОЇ РАДИ З ПИТАНЬ ПАМ'ЯТОК І ВИЗНАЧНИХ МІСЦЬ
UKRAINIAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES
COMITÉ NATIONAL UKRAINIEN DU CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MONUMENTS ET DES SITES

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STATEMENT

of the Ukrainian National Committee of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) regarding the damage to the UNESCO World Heritage site "Kyiv: Saint-Sophia Cathedral and Related Monastic Buildings, Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra"

Recognizing the exceptional value of Ukraine's cultural heritage as an integral component of the cultural heritage of humanity, and deeply aware of the large-scale threats posed to it by the ongoing armed aggression of the Russian Federation, the Ukrainian National Committee of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) declares the following.

The World Heritage site "Kyiv: Saint-Sophia Cathedral and Related Monastic Buildings, Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra," inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1990, stands among the most outstanding monuments of human civilization and serves as a prominent testament to the centuries-old cultural and spiritual traditions of Eastern Europe. For centuries, the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra has played a pivotal role in the development of Christian culture, education, art, and spiritual life in Ukraine and the entire region. Marking its 975th anniversary since its founding this year, the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra is the largest center of Christianization in Eastern Europe and Northern Eurasia. Beyond its World Heritage status, the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra is under enhanced protection in accordance with the 1999 Second Protocol to the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. Its preservation is not only a national duty of Ukraine but also a matter of international responsibility.

On the night of June 15, 2026, as a result of another massive attack by the Russian Federation on the city of Kyiv, facilities within the National Preserve "Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra" were damaged. The Dormition Cathedral — the compositional and spiritual center of the Lavra ensemble — sustained the most severe damage. Due to a direct strike and the subsequent fire it caused, the roof, dome structures, and specific elements of the monument's facades and interior were damaged. The Tower of Ioann Kushnyk, a unique 17th–18th-century defensive structure that forms part of the Upper Lavra's fortification complex, was also damaged. Furthermore, the blast wave damaged the buildings of the Treasury of the National Museum of the History of Ukraine, the Museum of Books and Printing, and the National Historical Library.

It is of particular concern that this damage was inflicted on a monument that serves as one of the key attributes conveying the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage site. Such losses pose a threat not only to Ukrainian cultural heritage but also to the shared heritage of mankind. The Dormition Cathedral had already survived catastrophic destruction during World War II, when it was mined and blown up by retreating Soviet troops in 1941,

and was later revived through the dedicated efforts of independent Ukraine. Today, the monument has once again suffered from war, demonstrating yet again the vulnerability of cultural heritage during modern armed conflicts and the critical need to reinforce international mechanisms for its protection.

The damage to the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra occurred within the context of numerous documented cases of destruction and damage to Ukraine's cultural heritage sites resulting from the armed aggression of the Russian Federation. The aggressor's systemic intent to "scorch" Ukrainian history and eradicate its tangible symbols is clearly evidenced by attacks on iconic cultural heritage sites. Specifically, enemy strikes have targeted the Art Museum in Kharkiv; the National Art Museum, the "Chornobyl" Museum, and the Oleksandr Dovzhenko Film Studios in Kyiv; the Transfiguration Cathedral in Odesa; the Bernardine Monastery ensemble in Lviv; the Derzhprom building and the Hryhoriy Skovoroda Museum in the Kharkiv region; the Ivankiv Museum with its collection of works by Maria Prymachenko; the Art Museum and the House of Organ and Chamber Music in Dnipro, along with other prominent symbols of Ukrainian culture.

The combination of these facts points to a systemic threat to the cultural heritage of Ukraine and Europe, demanding a proper international legal assessment in accordance with the provisions of the 1954 Hague Convention and other norms of international humanitarian law.

The Ukrainian National Committee of ICOMOS appeals to the global community, urging the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS, ICCROM, the States Parties to the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, and other international organizations to take urgent measures to document the consequences of this attack, dispatch an expert monitoring mission to Kyiv, and provide support for the preservation of the damaged monuments. Protecting the cultural heritage of the National Preserve "Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra" is not solely Ukraine's concern. It is a matter of shared responsibility for the international community to safeguard the cultural heritage of humanity. The damage inflicted upon a World Heritage site in the heart of a European capital challenges the entire system of international protection of cultural property and demands a decisive response from the global community.

Bureau of the Ukrainian National Committee of ICOMOS

June 15, 2026