



WAR IN UKRAINE THE BATTLE FOR CULTURE

International Forum on Safety of Cultural Heritage

February 08-09, 2023

RESOLUTION

BASED ON THE RESULTS OF THE FORUM
"WAR IN UKRAINE: THE BATTLE FOR CULTURE"

February 24, 2022, became a turning point for Ukraine and the whole world. Despite all the narratives invented and spread by Russian propaganda, the real motive behind Russia's aggression is quite clear. They are trying to destroy Ukraine as a sovereign state and eliminate the Ukrainian people as an independent and free nation.

Because of this, Ukrainian culture, and especially its cultural heritage, is a special target for Putin's regime. It will remain under threat until Russia capitulates and ceases its aggression, both on the battlefield and in the information space (hybrid propaganda).

Despite its vulnerability, the culture is not defenseless. On the contrary, it has shown its ability to defend itself, and ultimately shape its agenda. Workers of the cultural sphere, volunteers, soldiers, local communities, and thousands of caring people show their civic position, and in many cases, real heroism, trying to protect Ukraine's culture and cultural heritage.

The solidarity of the whole world, coming together to save and preserve culture in times of war is unprecedented in scale.

To assess the aggressor's army scale of destruction, Ukraine addressed the world experience presented in the norms of international law, namely the First and Second protocols of the Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict of 1954.

The realities of a full-scale war display the ineffectiveness of those provisions of the Hague Convention, which refer to the obligation of the contracting parties to refrain from any hostile acts targeting objects of cultural significance, looting, vandalism, illegal appropriation, trafficking, etc. However, it is because of these legal norms, we can classify actions committed by Russians as crimes. It imposes an obligation on both Ukraine and the international community to make efforts to document and investigate each recorded crime and bring the perpetrator to justice.

This Resolution is the outcome of discussions among about 200 experts from Ukraine and abroad. The discussion was held within the framework of the Forum, initiated by the Heritage Emergency Response Initiative (HERI) and the Maidan Museum with several partners.

The goal of this Resolution is not only to summarize the analysis of problems, challenges, and the completed work but also to become a step closer to **the formation of a road map for the preservation, rescue, stabilization, and development of the cultural sphere of Ukraine.**

Today, Ukraine became a training ground for improving, revising, adapting, and testing standards, principles, and methodologies designed for responding to the challenges that the cultural heritage is facing in territories of large-scale and active military operations. We are obliged to use the acquired experience, no matter if it was a positive case or if we made some mistakes or suffered losses, to update and develop the system for responding to threats and losses of cultural values.

Another **crucial part is the experience of solidarity and partnership**, both nationally and globally. The most important lesson of this experience is that algorithms, instructions, and action plans are essential, however, they will never predict all possible challenges and alterations. So, finally, everything depends on people: motivated, professional, ready to make operational decisions, work on implementing changes and bear responsibility for it. People who, at the level of their competencies and capabilities, consider it their duty to respond to other people's troubles and problems.

Another obvious conclusion is that the state should control and coordinate activities for the preservation and protection of cultural heritage. However, this control and coordination will never be effective without proper and open communication with all sides involved: directors and employees of cultural institutions, the professional community, volunteers, local self-government, the central military, and law enforcement authorities. This communication cannot be fragmented and one-sided. It must work as an effective system that ensures clarity at all levels and the development of the most effective operational solutions.

Forum participants agreed on the urgent need for the **formation of a national doctrine** for the protection of cultural heritage – a strategic document that considers the Ukrainian and world experience of wars and emergencies, the dynamics of technological progress, the opportunities and challenges of globalization and glocalization, the existing world system of protection and preservation of cultural heritage.

The doctrine should include the following stages:

- functioning in non-crisis conditions and preparedness for a crisis;
- crisis response;
- stabilization and recovery.

The key principle of the doctrine is that the preservation, transfer, promotion, and development of cultural heritage is an element of national security, along with territorial integrity, Ukraine's independence, its democratic and legal system, and environmental security. Moreover, the nation's cultural «firmware» forms society's understanding of the importance of all the mentioned values and the ability to defend them. The cultural heritage and preserved historical memory given to us by ancestors ensured Ukraine's existence in the past and present and are the basis for our nation's future.

The thematic priorities of the doctrine consist of four groups. According to this division, a list of tasks and principles (which are fundamental, but not exhaustive) is proposed:

I. Objects of cultural heritage:

architectural, historical, and archaeological monuments; museum objects and artworks; collections; museums, archives, libraries, etc.; knowledge and traditions, historical memory, folklore and traditional art, crafts, national cuisine, art schools, etc.:

- the evacuation algorithm of movable objects of cultural heritage, the formation of strategic stocks of necessary materials for evacuation, and the network of equipped storage facilities;
- digitization of 100% of the Museum Fund of Ukraine, the National Archive Fund, and immovable monuments. The priority is the digitization of the accounting documentation;
- centralized storage and preservation of digitized data with a security system, and an approved digital content verification procedure. Databases should be created in compliance with European standards, ensuring the transfer/recoding of data into databases is according to the new standard;
- a single online register of the state part of the Museum Fund of Ukraine;
- creation of a national catalog of monuments with online access and digitization data (scans, photos, 3D models, video, audio, etc.);
- unified instructions on requirements for digitization, databases, and metadata schemes in various areas;
- systematic documentation of losses, damages, and risks; creation of universal protocols, and available tools; formation of a single register of losses;
- preservation of damaged objects, stabilization, and prevention of unauthorized repairs/demolition;
- a systematic policy for tracing and restitution of cultural values, exported and looted both in this war and in the past;
- timely museumification and memorialization of the modern war's significant events, objects, and phenomena.

II. Experts:

museum, library and archive workers, cultural workers, conservators, first aiders, heads of cultural institutions, specialized officials of all levels, public experts, etc.:

- measures for systematic targeted support and protection of cultural workers during the war, especially displaced persons and workers from occupied/de-occupied regions;
- balance of responsibilities and authority for leaders and employees of institutions, action protocols;
- practical and realistic updated instructions for actions in case of emergencies, or the need for evacuation;

- ensuring staff development, and exchange of experience at the regional, national, and international levels;
- carrying out a policy aimed at increasing the social status of cultural workers, which includes providing competitive salaries. It would make cultural and monument protection industries competitive in attracting highly qualified personnel;
- provision of quality education in the field of cultural heritage preservation, introducing new specialties in universities, and activating informal education in this field;
- creation of professional networks for communication, partnership, and cooperation.

III. Institutions:

the state system of preservation, protection, promotion, and development of cultural heritage and culture: vertical of the central state authority, cultural units of local self-government, cultural institutions (museums, archives, libraries, theaters, cultural centers), conservation and preservation institutions, public organizations, unions, associations, etc:

- development of a national strategy for the preservation of cultural heritage during emergencies;
- creation of a national emergency response system dedicated to the cultural field;
- determination of the ratio of centralization/decentralization of responsibility and resources in the matter of the safety of cultural values;
- a clear, coordinated, and legalized emergency response system; introduction of instructions, methodological materials, and protocols that consider the experience of limited time, resources, personnel, and communication capabilities, and are based on international standards, etc.;
- thoroughly documenting attacks on cultural heritage, especially those that are potential war crimes and committed against cultural heritage protected by international conventions;
- reform of the museum, monument protection, and restoration industries;
- establishing coordination and interaction mechanisms for all relevant parties and institutions at the horizontal and vertical levels;
- activation of civil-military cooperation of the Armed Forces;
- creation of special units in the Armed Forces of Ukraine for the preservation of cultural heritage (CPP units);
- a set of informational and educational training for the military to prepare them for responding to challenges and securing cultural heritage objects in the territories of military operations;
- ensuring preparation for the post-war recovery and sustainability of the cultural ecosystem of Ukraine.



IV. The international system

of cultural heritage protection – a system of governmental and non-governmental organizations, institutions, as well as norms of international law:

- actualization of the concept of the international system of protection of cultural heritage, deterrence of crimes against culture, and response to them;
- coordination of actions to preserve cultural heritage and support culture;
- a centralized and systematic approach to the assessment of cultural heritage damage and billing for reparations;
- creation and systematic updating of the catalog of looted objects, similar to the ICOM Red List of the Cultural Heritage for Ukraine, dissemination of information about it at customs, auctions, and in the Interpol network to prevent illegal trade in cultural values or their appropriation;
- application of all legal instruments to protect cultural heritage and prevent its trade or illegal trafficking during the war;
- introduction of a comprehensive plan for the restitution of cultural values of Ukraine;
- coordination of efforts to document crimes against culture and help bring perpetrators to justice in international courts;
- expansion of sanctions against the aggressor and the inevitability of state responsibility for war crimes against culture;
- improvement of national legislation on the protection of cultural heritage, bringing it into line with international norms and practices;
- establishment and activation of the National Blue Shield Committee (Blue Shield Ukraine);
- activation of international partnership in the field of research, training, and information exchange, as well as actions to preserve cultural heritage in wartime;
- strengthening support for the Ukrainian cultural ecosystem, including the needs of the culture and cultural heritage sectors in the range of humanitarian support for Ukraine.