

USCBS and AIA Statement on Ukraine

Cultural Heritage Organizations Urge Governments to Respect Hague Convention and International Humanitarian Law

As organizations committed to the protection of global heritage, we condemn the loss of human life that has been inflicted in the conflict in Ukraine. We call on all parties to the conflict to respect the precepts of International Humanitarian Law, embodied in the 1949 Geneva Conventions, their Protocols, and the 1954 Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its First Protocol. First and foremost, these instruments prohibit attacks on civilians and civilian objects, including hospitals, schools, places of worship, and cultural property.

Ukraine has a rich cultural heritage. Its museums house artistic and other cultural objects from antiquity, the Byzantine and medieval periods, and the 17th century to the present day. The collections include Ukrainian artworks, folk art, ethnographic materials, and rare religious icons, as well as artworks from throughout Europe. Ukraine is also home to extensive and valuable archival and library collections. The National Museum of History alone has over 800,000 objects including archaeological artifacts of Scythian art, Viking Age weaponry of Kievan Rus, numismatic collections, historical manuscripts, paintings, and relics of the democratic and social revolutions of the twentieth century. Inscribed on the World Heritage List for their outstanding universal value are six cultural sites in Ukraine and one transnational natural site, which spans eighteen European countries; an additional seventeen sites are on the Tentative list. Ukraine is particularly known for its churches, monasteries, and other religious sites; its archaeological heritage spans from the Neolithic period to the Scythians and to Greek, Roman and Byzantine remains.

The 1954 Hague Convention, to which both Russia and Ukraine are parties, prohibits the targeting of cultural sites, including museums, archaeological zones, libraries, archives, and religious and historic structures. Yet there are media reports that museums have been attacked and at least one museum has burned with the loss of some of its collection. While condemning these actions carried out during conflict, we remind all parties that the removal of cultural objects from occupied territory is a violation of the Hague Convention's First Protocol. We also call on cultural institutions and art market participants to be particularly scrupulous in their dealings, including museum loans, with any cultural objects that may have been removed illegally from Ukraine during occupation or armed conflict, including Orthodox icons and archaeological artifacts which are the types of objects known to be trafficked.

The Archaeological Institute of America

The Archaeological Institute of America promotes archaeological inquiry and public understanding of the material record of the human past to foster an appreciation of diverse cultures and our shared humanity. Founded in 1879, the AIA has over 200,000 Members and

more than 100 local Societies in the United States, Canada, and overseas.

www.archaeological.org

American Institute for Conservation

The American Institute for Conservation is the leading membership association for current and aspiring conservators and allied professionals who preserve cultural heritage. Representing more than 3,500 individuals in more than forty countries around the world working in the domains of science, art, and history through treatment, research, collections care, education, and more, they all have the same goal: preserve our cultural heritage so we can learn from it today and appreciate it in the future.

www.culturalheritage.org

American Research Institute in Turkey

The American Research Institute in Turkey (ARIT) is the primary organization serving American and Canadian scholars interested in conducting research in and about Turkey. The ARIT centers offer a wide range of scholarly and educational activities in Istanbul and Ankara, while the U.S. ARIT administers fellowships for research and language study in Turkey and supports academic exchanges with Turkish and other scholars. ARIT is a membership organization, composed of 45 North American universities and institutions, and is a charter member of the [Council of American Overseas Research Centers](#) (CAORC),

www.aritweb.org

American Society of Overseas Research

The American Society of Overseas Research, founded in 1900, is an international organization of archaeologists, historians, linguists, and cultural heritage professionals who initiate, encourage, and support research into, and public understanding of, the cultures and history of the Near East and wider Mediterranean.

www.asor.org

Arkansas Archaeological Survey

The Arkansas Archeological Survey mission is to study and protect the state's archaeological sites, to preserve and manage information and collections from sites, and to communicate what we learn to the public. The Survey has long been a model for statewide archeological programs in the United States and around the world.

archeology.uark.edu

Association of Academic Museums and Galleries

The Association of Academic Museums and Galleries is the leading educational and professional organization for academic museums, galleries, and collections. In recognition of the unique opportunities and challenges of its constituents, the AAMG establishes and supports best practices, educational activities and professional development that enable its member organizations to fulfill their educational missions.

www.aamg-us.org

Association of Art Museum Directors

The Association of Art Museum Directors advances the profession by cultivating leadership capabilities of directors, advocating for the field, and fostering excellence in art museums. An agile, issues-driven organization, AAMD has three desired outcomes: engagement, leadership, and shared learning. Further information about AAMD's professional practice guidelines and position papers is available at www.aamd.org.

Society for American Archaeology

The SAA is an international organization that, since its founding in 1934, has been dedicated to research about and interpretation and protection of the archaeological heritage of the Americas. With nearly 7,000 members, SAA represents professional and avocational archaeologists, archaeology students in colleges and universities, and archaeologists working at Tribal agencies, museums, government agencies, and the private sector. SAA has members throughout the U.S., as well as in many nations around the world.

www.saa.org

Society for Historical Archaeology

Formed in 1967, the Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA) is the largest scholarly group concerned with the archaeology of the modern world (A.D. 1400-present). The main focus of the society is the era since the beginning of European exploration. SHA promotes scholarly research and the dissemination of knowledge concerning historical archaeology.

www.sha.org

U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield

The U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield is dedicated to preventing destruction and theft of cultural property during armed conflict and natural disasters worldwide. The name, Blue Shield, comes from the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, which specifies a blue shield as the symbol for marking protected cultural property. USCBS is an affiliated national committee of Blue Shield (International).

www.uscbs.org