

ICOMOS

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MONUMENTS ET DES SITES
CONSEJO INTERNACIONAL DE MONUMENTOS Y SITIOS
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ СОВЕТ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ПАМЯТНИКОВ И ДОСТОПРИМЕЧАТЕЛЬНЫХ МЕСТ

Our Ref.: TP/GJ/31

Paris, 7 March 2022

For the attention of the
ICOMOS Committee Presidents and
Working Group Focal Points

Dear Presidents, Dear Focal Points, Dear Colleagues,

The ICOMOS Board thanks the entire ICOMOS family - members, Committees and Working Groups - for their immediate reactions and for their expressions of support for our Ukrainian colleagues and their heritage.

At last week's Board meetings, the situation in Ukraine, as well as other conflicts and crisis situations that unfortunately are affecting many countries around the world, were discussed at length. The Board also held an emergency meeting with ICOMOS' technical bodies – that is the ICOMOS International Scientific Committees and Working Groups - to exchange ideas and coordinate actions in the context of the current conflict in Ukraine. We are also in direct touch with both our ICOMOS colleagues in Ukraine and Russia.

The Board examined the numerous individual messages from ICOMOS members, but in particular the following:

- Open Statement of Baltic, Belarus and Georgian ICOMOS National Committees, 27 February 2022;
- Letter from ICOMOS Our Common Dignity - Rights Based Approaches Working Group (OCD-RBAWG), 1 March 2022
- Letter from the President of ICOMOS Ukraine to the President of ICOMOS Poland, dated 2 March received by ICOMOS Board on 4 March 2022;

ICOMOS strongly condemns the invasion by the Russian Federation of the sovereign state of Ukraine, an act that flies in the face of international law and the universal values enshrined in the UN Charter. ICOMOS as a professional organization in the field of cultural heritage further condemns any destruction of cultural heritage, regardless of the global location of the conflict. We further deplore reports of any discrimination toward minorities among the civil population trying to flee from Ukraine.

We must always endeavour to ensure that our official statements are timely, consistent, based on expert, reliable and verified information and are not politically driven. Our concerns must include foremost the plight and suffering of the civil population, the respect for local communities and support to heritage rights-holders and caretakers.

Following the UN General Assembly resolution, the UNESCO Executive Board has called for a special session on Ukraine on 15 March [<https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/ukraine-unesco-statement-following-adoption-un-general-assembly-resolution?hub=701>]. ICOMOS will be informed by the World Heritage Centre of the outcome of this meeting.

The ICOMOS Board has asked ICORP (the ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Risk Preparedness) to set up a special task force on Ukraine within its Crisis Monitoring and Response Working Group, which is coordinated by Zeynep Gül Ünal, Vice President of ICOMOS.

Building on our protocols in the case of armed conflict, the special task force will, in constant contact with ICOMOS Ukraine, collect and verify information (damages and threats to heritage, initiatives in favour of heritage, needs on the ground) as a tool for ICOMOS decision making, planning and action – where, when and how can ICOMOS support our colleagues on the ground.

**If you have any useful information, please contact the Task Force via the email address:
crisisresponse@icomos.org**

As an important non-governmental network for exchange among cultural heritage professionals worldwide, we encourage dialogue and solidarity among all our members. At a time of increasing division and polarisation in the world, we must remain united to sustain and nurture this dialogue, beyond any forces that may attempt to drive us apart. We must also recognize that colleagues may not always be in a position to raise their voices – and we must speak for them.

We are always stronger if ICOMOS speaks with a single voice. Let us put our combined expertise and energy at the service of our colleagues and their heritage.

Yours sincerely



Teresa Patricio
President of ICOMOS