

Titre: Destroying heritage: a conflict strategy.

Introductory text

ENG_ International law considers the deliberate destruction of heritage to be a war crime.

Since 24 February 2022, Ukraine has been facing the devastating destruction of its cultural heritage. Attacks on symbols of Ukrainian identity, cultural centres, schools, archives and museums are often planned and deliberate. In the last two years, UNESCO has observed that **343 cultural sites** across the country have been damaged, including 127 religious buildings, 31 museums, 151 historic buildings, 19 monuments, 14 libraries and one archive centre.

This exhibition presents images collected by Polish and Ukrainian photographers who documented the appalling destruction of these sites in Ukraine.

The aim here is to highlight an aspect of war that is often overlooked: **the attack on identity and cultural diversity**. Through these images, everyone is encouraged to question the importance of preserving cultural heritage in the midst of conflict, in accordance with international law, and to recognise its essential value in shaping a nation's identity and resilience.

*This exhibition, co-produced by the European Heritage Heads Forum and Les Halles Saint-Géry, has been made possible thanks to the work of the **Polish National Institute for Cultural Heritage** and the image collection work carried out by the **Polish Centre for Cultural Support in Ukraine**. The photographs were taken by Marek Lemiesz (PL), Tomasz Grzywaczewski (PL) and Yurii Veres (UKR).*

Conclusion text

ENG_ Destroying heritage: a conflict strategy.

*This exhibition, co-produced by the **European Heritage Heads Forum** and **Les Halles Saint-Géry**, has been made possible thanks to the work of the **Polish National Institute for Cultural Heritage** and the image collection work carried out by the **Polish Centre for Cultural Support in Ukraine**.*

The photos are from the work from:


- ❖ **Marek Lemiesz:** Archaeologist, National Institute of Cultural Heritage Director's Representative on Protection of Cultural Heritage in Armed Conflicts. Since 2022, he has been leading the Ukrainian-Polish project (Ukrainian Heritage Rescue Project) on inventorying wartime losses of cultural heritage in Chernihiv and Kherson oblasts.
- ❖ **Tomasz Grzywaczewski:** Writer and journalist. He has reported on armed conflicts in Donbass, Turkish Kurdistan and Nagorno-Karabakh. Director of the documentary film "Erase the Nation" showing Russian crimes against Ukraine's cultural heritage, and from which some of the photos shown here were taken.
- ❖ **Yurii Veres:** Musician, singer, songwriter and photographer. Member of the band Kam'yaniy gist. They used to play for ordinary citizens, today their audience is mainly soldiers.



The **European Heritage Heads Forum** is an informal expert network gathering national heritage directors of Europe (in built heritage, landscapes and archaeology). Since 2006, the 26 members of the EHHF meet annually to share their experiences in managing Europe's cultural heritage..



Every year, one country leads the EHHF in the form of a rotating presidency. In 2024, the **Polish National Institute of Cultural Heritage** is leading the EHHF. Since the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Institute has been particularly involved in safeguarding Ukrainian cultural heritage, notably through the creation of the **Polish Support Center for Culture in Ukraine**.


Acknowledgements :

We would like to express our sincere thanks to the following people without whom this exhibition would not have been possible: Urban Brussels, *Thierry Wauters*; the European Heritage Heads Forum, *Juliette Toussaint*; Halles Saint-Géry, *Lucile de Calan and Mario Rojas* ; the photographers *Marek Lemiesz, Tomasz Grzywaczewski and Yurii Veres*; the Polish National Institute for Cultural Heritage, *Katarzyna Zalasieńska, Aleksandra Brodowska, Adrianna Barłóg, Anna Śmigielska*.

	Photo	Selection
3		Yes
Author	Marek Lemiesz	
Location	Kyselivka, Mykolaiv Oblast	
Date	November 2022	
dpi	72	
Short info	The village was founded in 1863 by Polish, Lithuanian and Belorussian Catholics. They were resettled there by a tsarist decree.	
Caption	The rural village of Kyselivka was founded in 1863 by Polish, Lithuanian and Belorussian Catholics and was heavily destroyed in February 2022.	

4		Yes
Author	Marek Lemiesz	
Location	Church in Kyselivka Kyselivka, Mykolaiv Oblast	
Date	November 2022	
dpi	72	
Short info	Built in the 19 th century, this church survived both World Wars and during the communist regime it was used as a kolkhoz repair base. The parish was revived in the early 1990s. It was destroyed in a shelling on May 2 nd 2022. Some of the possessions from the church were saved thanks to parishioners who hid the paintings.	
Caption	Built in the 19th century, the Church in Kyselivka survived both World Wars before it was destroyed in a shelling on May 2nd 2022.	
5		Yes
Author	Marek Lemiesz	
Location	Chernihiv Regional Youth Library Shevchenka Street, 63, Chernihiv, Chernihiv Oblast	
Date	October 2022	
dpi	762	
Short info	Neogothic building constructed at the end of the 19th century. The Russians thought that there were militaries in the library that's why they dropped 3 bombs on it.	

Caption	The Chernihiv Regional Youth Library, on which three bombs were dropped, was a neogothic building constructed at the end of the 19th century.	
6		Yes
Author	Tomasz Grzywaczewski	
Location	Konstytutsii Square, 1, Kharkiv, Kharkiv Oblast	
Date		
dpi	762	
Short info	Tomasz Grzywaczewski's film frame Building called "The House of Labour", built as a hotel on the beginning of the 20 th century and originally was called "Russia" The building was destroyed by a rocket hitting the roof.	
Caption	This building called "The House of Labour" in Kharkiv was built as a hotel originally called "Russia", at the beginning of the 20th century.	
7		Yes
Author	Yurii Veres	
Location	Chernihiv Regional Youth Library Shevchenka Street, 63, Chernihiv, Chernihiv Oblast	
Date		
dpi	300	
Short info	The roof of the library almost fell, but it rested on the wooden racks. Thanks to that, the workers could pull out all the books that were in great condition. The workers really hope that this library will be restored and the children can study again.	

Caption	The roof of the Chernihiv Regional Youth Library almost fell, but eventually rested on the wooden racks, which enabled workers to save some books.	
8		Yes
Author	Tomasz Grzywaczewski	
Location	Ethnographic Museum 1 May St. 21, Kupyansk, Kharkiv Oblast	
Date		
dpi	762	
Short info	<p>Tomasz Grzywaczewski's film frame</p> <p>The building was shot by S-300 missiles. The director and his coworkers died in the bombing.</p> <p>Now on the front door of the museum we can see this inscription: "For now, the museum of Heaven is here"</p>	
Caption	The Ethnographic Museum in Kupyansk was shot by S-300 missiles, causing the death of its director and coworkers.	


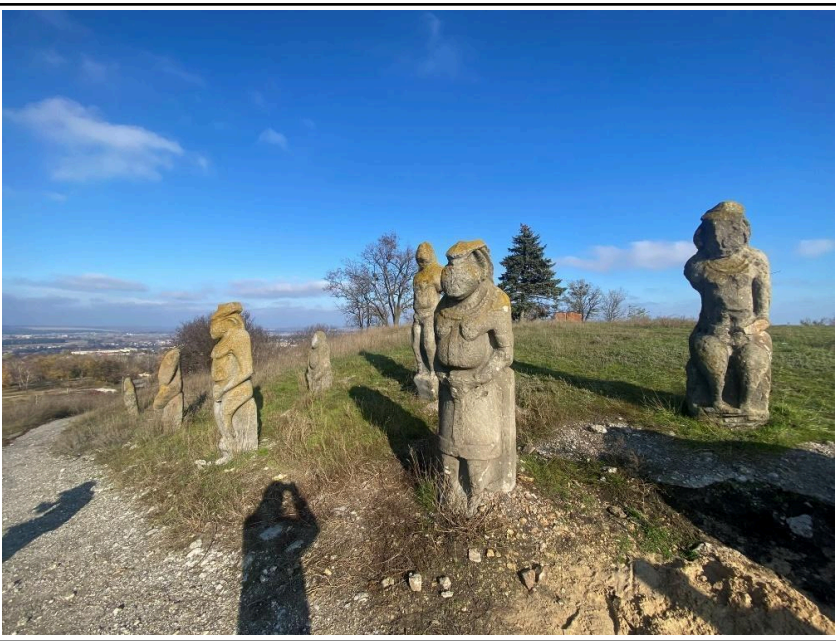
9

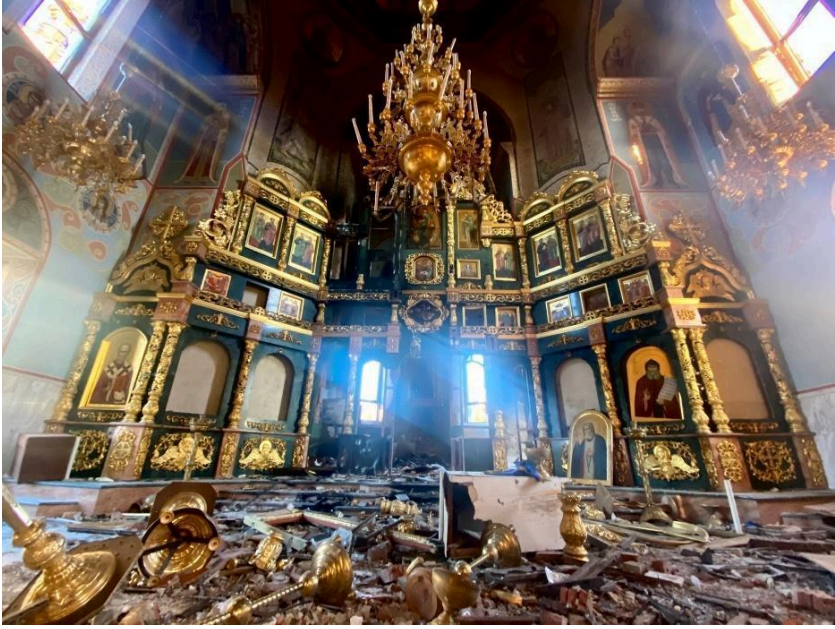


Yes

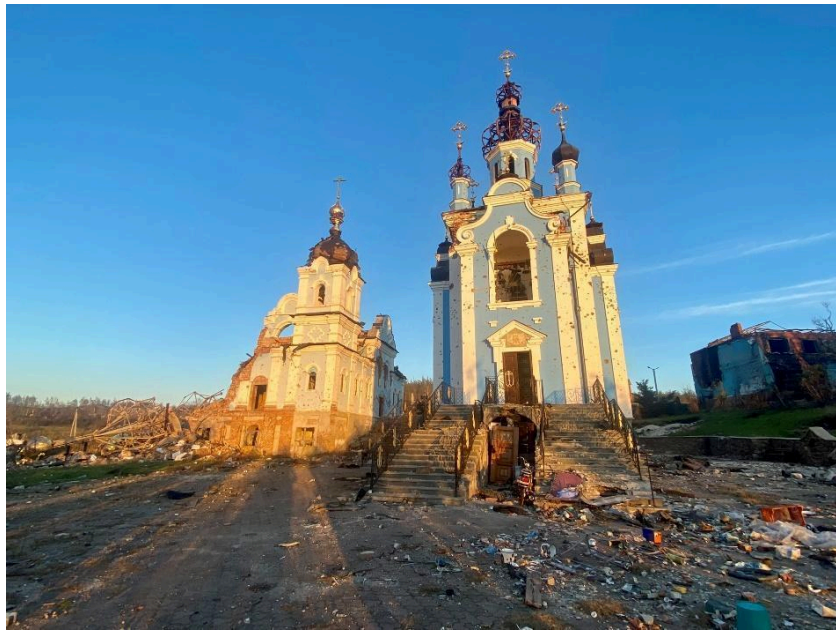
Author	Tomasz Grzywaczewski
Location	Trenches – the zero position (2 km away from the Russians)
Date	September 2023
dpi	72
Short info	Once an actor and musician, Myhailo Savitsky decided to fight for his homeland. Now he operates drones, adjusting artillery fire. His life was concentrate around music but now he need to focus on other things. His passion for music and a humor (laughing) help him survive.
Caption	Once an actor and musician, Myhailo Savitsky decided to fight for his homeland. Now he operates drones, adjusting artillery fire, from the trenches.

10		Yes (extra)
Author	Marek Lemiesz	
Location	Izium surroundings, Kharkiv Oblast	
Date	October 2022	
dpi	72	
Short info	Russian missile and destruction near Izium. Ukrainian investigators found hundreds of bodies in mass graves in this region.	
Caption	Destruction caused by a Russian missile near Izium, in October 2022.	
11		Yes
Author	Tomasz Grzywaczewski	
Location	Drobytsky Yar, Kharkiev, Kharkiev Oblast	
Date	November 2022	
dpi	72	
Short info	Symbolic Menorah, a monument in honor of Jews murdered in the Holocaust .	
Caption	Near Kharkiev, this symbolic Menorah, a monument in honor of Jews murdered in the Holocaust, was severely damaged.	

12		Yes
Author	Tomasz Grzywaczewski	
Location	National Literary and Memorial Museum of Hryhorij Skovoroda 3 с, вул. Приозерна, Skovorodynivka, Kharkiv Oblast	
Date	November 2022	
dpi	72	
Short info	Hryhorij Skoworoda entered the Ukrainian culture as an innovative teacher. An elite philosopher and he's an important figure. The museum presented his work. The building was destroyed by a rocket that flew from the north and hit the fuel supply, then ignited everything.	
Caption	The National Literary and Memorial Museum of Hryhorij Skovoroda (Ukrainian philosopher) was destroyed by a rocket that hit the fuel supply.	
13		Yes
Author	Tomasz Grzywaczewski	
Location	Krem'yanets' Mount Izyum, Charkiev Oblast	

Date	November 2022	
dpi	72	
Short info	Archeological site The Russians damaged sacred statues of women, known as “Stone Babas” – an example of Kumans’ art date from the 9 th to the 13 th century. Kumans were nomadic people from Central Asia.	
Caption	The Russian Forces damaged these sacred statues of women, known as “Stone Babas” (9th to the 13th century) on an archeological site located in Charkiev.	
14		Yes
Author	Tomasz Grzywaczewski	
Location	Bohorodychne, Donetsk Oblast	
Date	November 2022	
dpi	72	
Short info	After destroying the church, the Russians established their field base here and decided to use the sacred place around the iconostasis as a restroom.	
Caption	The Church in Bohorodychne was partially destroyed before the Russian troops established their field base there.	

15



Yes

Author	Tomasz Grzywaczewski
Location	Bohorodychne, Donetsk Oblast
Date	November 2022
dpi	72
Short info	The Russians destroyed this Orthodox Church and the monastery in a shelling. They established their field base here.
Caption	The Russian troops destroyed the Orthodox Church and monastery in Bohorodychne in a shelling and established their field base there.

17

Yes





Author	Yurii Veres
Location	Teacher's House Volodymyrska St, 57, Kyiv, Kyiv Oblast
Date	October 2022
dpi	300
Short info	The Teacher's House was built in 1901 based on the project of Pavel Alyoshin a Russian architect. The building was damaged on October 2022. The dome was damaged by an explosion and the windows in the whole building were smashed.
Caption	The Teacher's House in Kyiv was built in 1901 based on the project of Russian architect Pavel Alyoshin. In October 2022, an explosion smashed the windows in the whole building.



Yes

→ Cover of
the exhibition

Author	Yurii Veres
Location	Central Community Centre Soborna St, 183, Irpin, Kyiv Oblast
Date	April 2022
dpi	300
Short info	Built in 1952, the Cultural Centre was one of the city's main cultural and creative spaces. As a result of fierce fighting in the city of Irpin in March 2022, the Central House of Culture was severely damaged. Only the entrance group survived.
Caption	Built in 1952, the Central House of Culture of Irpin was the city's main cultural and creative space, severely damaged during the fierce battles in March 2022.

19		Yes
Author	Yurii Veres	
Location	Bohdana Khmelnytskoho St, Makariv, Kyiv Oblast	
Date	May 2022	
dpi	300	
Short info	Taras Shevchenko statue - the Culture House in the background Makariv came under Russian fire at the end of February 2022. Houses were bombed, the hospital, kindergarten and most of the infrastructure was destroyed.	
Caption	In Makariv, this statue of Taras Shevchenko (Ukrainian poet) and the Culture House in the background were under Russian fire at the end of February 2022.	
Caption	After the Russian attack in March 2022, most of the buildings in Borodianka were destroyed, including this Taras Shevchenko statue (Ukrainian poet and public figure).	
21		Yes
Author	Yurii Veres	
Location	Borodianka, Kyiev Oblast	
Date	April 2022	
dpi	300	
Short info	Taras Shevchenko statue Borodianka was a small town. After the Russian attack, most of the buildings in the town were destroyed, including almost the entire main street. Bombs hit the centres of buildings causing them to collapse. After the liberation of Borodianka in April 2022,	

	firefighters worked every day to retrieve the bodies of people who had died from under the rubble. These activities could not be carried out without problems, as their work risked the collapse of more buildings.
Caption	After the Russian attack in March 2022, most of the buildings in Borodianka were destroyed, including this Taras Shevchenko statue (Ukrainian poet and public figure).