

CULTURAL HERITAGE: 563 SITES VERIFIED BY UNESCO

UNESCO has verified damage to 563 cultural sites in Ukraine since 24 February 2022 — 165 religious sites, 43 museums, 24 libraries among them (as of 29 Sep 2026). Ukraine's Ministry of Culture counts 2,138 heritage sites damaged or destroyed by the end of August 2026. Three World Heritage properties — Kyiv, Lviv and the historic centre of Odesa — are on the List of World Heritage in Danger. In the occupied south, museum collections were taken to Crimea and have not come back.

UKRAINE EVIDENCE HUB
VERIFIED RECORD
OCT 2026

563

cultural sites in Ukraine with damage verified by UNESCO since 24 Feb 2022, in 16 regions

A

UNESCO, as of 29 Sep 2026

2,138

heritage sites damaged or destroyed (47 destroyed), and 2,640 cultural institutions — libraries, clubs, museums, art schools

B

Ministry of Culture of Ukraine, end of Aug 2026

3

World Heritage properties on the List in Danger: Odesa (Jan 2023), Kyiv and Lviv (15 Sep 2023)

A

World Heritage Committee

10,223+

items taken from the Kherson Art Museum to occupied Crimea, 31 Oct – 4 Nov 2022

B

Prosecutor General, reported 10 Feb 2026

WHAT HAPPENED

Strikes. UNESCO's count covers 16 regions; Donetsk (149), Kharkiv (87) and Odesa (66) lead. Named cases: Mariupol Drama Theatre (16 Mar 2022), the buffer zone of Lviv's historic centre (6 Jul 2023), Odesa's Transfiguration Cathedral (23 Jul 2023), and the Holy Presentation Monastery beside the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra (night of 21–22 Oct 2026).

Removal. In the last days before Russian forces left Kherson, more than 10,223 items went from the Kherson Art Museum to a museum in Simferopol. In Melitopol in April 2022 the local museum's Scythian gold was taken; the New York Times counted at least 198 gold objects (Tier C).

Excavation and appropriation. In occupied Crimea, Russian archaeologists dug the medieval settlement of Solkhat without Ukraine's permission; finds went to the State Hermitage and into Russia's State Museum Fund catalogue (Prosecutor General, 18 Aug 2026).

WHO VERIFIED IT

- A UNESCO, damaged cultural sites in Ukraine — verified list, figures as of 29 Sep 2026 (page updated 7 Oct 2026)
- A World Heritage Committee: Historic Centre of Odesa (Jan 2023), Kyiv and L'viv (15 Sep 2023) on the List of World Heritage in Danger; decision 48 COM 7A.30 (Jun 2026) on damage to the Lavra
- B Ministry of Culture of Ukraine, end of Aug 2026; Office of the Prosecutor General, 10 Feb 2026 and 18 Aug 2026
- C Human Rights Watch, 20 Dec 2022 (Kherson); RFE/RL citing the New York Times, 1 May 2022 (Melitopol)

LEGAL QUALIFICATION — THREE LAYERS

ESTABLISHED UNESCO has verified the damage at each of the 563 sites on its list, and the World Heritage Committee has put three Ukrainian World Heritage properties on the List in Danger because of the war. No international court has yet ruled on attacks on Ukraine's cultural property.

PATTERN Hague Convention of 1954 and its First Protocol (no export of cultural property from occupied territory); Rome Statute art. 8(2)(b)(ix) (attacks on buildings dedicated to religion, art, science and historic monuments) and 8(2)(b)(xvi) (pillage). Damage in 16 regions in every year of the war, and removals from occupied museums, are the pattern evidence.

POSITION Ukraine qualifies the attacks and removals as war crimes (art. 438 CCU) and has notified 11 members of the Russian armed forces of suspicion (Prosecutor General, 18 Aug 2026). Human Rights Watch qualifies the Kherson removals as pillage amounting to war crimes. Pending international findings.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE

Russian armed forces	Strikes that damaged protected cultural property	11 notified of suspicion, art. 438 CCU (Prosecutor General, 18 Aug 2026)
Kherson occupation officials	Removal of the Kherson Art Museum collection to Simferopol	Notices of suspicion to two officials (Prosecutor General, 10 Feb 2026)
Excavators at Solkhat	A Hermitage researcher and a Crimean "institute" official: excavation and transfer of the finds	Notices of suspicion (Prosecutor General, 18 Aug 2026)

RUSSIA SAID / THE RECORD SAYS

RUSSIAN-INSTALLED KHERSON ADMINISTRATION, 26 OCT 2022

[It] must be saved at any cost, even at the cost of evacuation.

RUSSIAN MINISTRY OF DEFENCE, 22 OCT 2026

[Struck were] transport infrastructure facilities in Kyiv.

RUSSIAN-APPOINTED HEAD OF THE MELITOPOL MUSEUM, 2022

[The artefacts] are of great culture value for the entire former Soviet Union.

THE RECORD

The collection went from one occupied city to another occupied territory and has stayed there four years (Prosecutor General; HRW).

THE RECORD

One of three cluster warheads burst between the Lavra, a World Heritage site, and a monastery, damaging the monastery (President of Ukraine).

THE RECORD

He did not say where they had been taken; none has been returned (RFE/RL, 1 May 2022).

WHAT WE ASK
OF MEMBER STATES

- Cite the UNESCO count and name the sites in national statements; record each new strike on a protected site.
- Demand the return of every object removed from Kherson, Melitopol and other occupied museums; refuse loans and exhibitions of them.
- Support UNESCO monitoring and the protection of collections and archives before winter.
- Bring cultural-property cases to international and national courts, including under universal jurisdiction.