

“Safeguarding Ukraine’s Cultural Heritage During Wartime: Emergency Risk Management and Community-Based Action”

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Abstract:

The ongoing war in Ukraine has created unprecedented risks for cultural heritage collections and historic monuments. Museums, archives, and religious sites face direct threats from bombardment, looting, forced relocation, and lack of access to conservation resources. This presentation examines strategies applied in Ukraine to mitigate risks to collections and safeguard cultural identity during wartime, offering lessons relevant to institutions operating in uncertain or hazardous conditions.

Key areas of focus include:

- Emergency preparedness and response: rapid assessment of damage to historic sites, protective measures for collections, and evacuation protocols developed under crisis conditions.
- Risk management for hazardous collections: addressing threats such as contaminated or structurally unstable artifacts in museums damaged by shelling, and implementing safe storage policies despite limited infrastructure.
- Community involvement and local networks: mobilizing volunteers, local conservators, and cultural workers to provide immediate stabilization of objects and prevent secondary losses.
- International collaboration: cooperation between Ukrainian institutions and global organizations (e.g., UNESCO, WMF, ICCROM) to receive technical guidance, emergency funding, and supplies for safe conservation.
- Sustainability under crisis: balancing urgent interventions with long-term preservation goals, ensuring that emergency treatments do not compromise future restoration.

The case studies will include actions taken in Ukrainian museums and historic buildings since 2022, highlighting both challenges and innovative solutions. While focused on Ukraine, the strategies presented are applicable to cultural heritage protection worldwide, particularly in areas facing armed conflict, natural disasters, or other emergencies.

The presentation will be delivered in Ukrainian with simultaneous interpretation into English, ensuring accessibility to an international audience.

Keywords:

Ukraine, cultural heritage, wartime preservation, emergency response, risk management, collections care.