

Mr Anton Kuznetsov
Deputy Director of International Cooperation
Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation
Moscow

2 March 2022

Dear Mr Kuznetsov

I write to you in my capacity as President of the Blue Shield, the international non-governmental organisation created in 1996 to help protect cultural property in the event of armed conflict. The Blue Shield is an independent, neutral, impartial organisation established under Dutch Law (<https://theblueshield.org/>).

I write obviously in connection with the current conflict in Ukraine. Noting that the Russian Federation is a signatory to the 1954 Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its 1st (1954) Protocol, and to the 1972 World Heritage Convention, I ask for your assurance that

- The Russian Federation recognises that significant cultural property in the conflict area is protected under the 1954 Hague Convention and/or the 1972 World Heritage Convention under which inscribed World Heritage sites are recognised as being of “outstanding universal value” to the *whole of humanity* and which obligates States Parties to take no action that will damage World Heritage on their own territory, or that of other states.
- All Russian Federation forces fighting in Ukraine will act in strict compliance with their responsibilities to safeguard and respect all cultural property in Ukraine, as defined in Article 1 of the 1954 Hague Convention, and pursuant to obligations in both the 1954 Hague Convention and its 1st (1954) Protocol, including having taken all feasible measures to identify and protect all such cultural property before and during conflict.
- That no cultural institutions (museums, libraries, archives, etc.), sites or monuments, historic or religious buildings will be directly targeted specifically by Russian Federation troops or taken into military use, without clear and imperative military necessity. I draw particular attention to the World Heritage site in Kyiv: Saint-Sophia Cathedral and Related Monastic Buildings, Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra, which is at grave risk of damage from Russian Federation attacks on the city.
- That no cultural collections will be removed from their current locations to locations in the Russian Federation, and
- That all necessary support, and protection, will be given to Ukrainian authorities to help safeguard all cultural property in Ukraine.

The Blue Shield stands willing to help protect all cultural property, both tangible and intangible, affected by the invasion.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'P. G. Stone', followed by a period.

Professor Peter G Stone OBE FSA MCifA
President, The Blue Shield