



unesco

# In the Face of War, UNESCO's action in Ukraine





# Foreword by Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO



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“ War causes death, human suffering and unimaginable destruction, and international law, which is supposed to spare civilians, schools, places of culture, is regularly violated.

The humanitarian crisis which has struck Ukraine, exceptional in its suddenness and scale, is a painful reminder of this. Faced with this situation, we have a responsibility to unite in cooperation and solidarity to support all those affected.

Our action in these tragic times is important because it conserves the seeds of tomorrow's peace. It is now that we must do everything to ensure that these common goods, around which UNESCO's mandate revolves, are not reduced to dust.

Education, science, culture, information will be essential to rebuild peace.”

# A collective mobilization

Following the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation on 24 February 2022, UNESCO has been advocating for respect for international humanitarian law and implementing emergency measures in Ukraine as part of its mandate for education, science, culture, information and communication.

The Organization is closely monitoring the situation on the ground, whether it concerns the safety of journalists covering the conflict, the preservation of cultural heritage or the possibility for children and young people to have access to education.

As previous crises have demonstrated, culture, education and information are major elements in meeting the needs of populations in times of war, building resilience and preparing for the future.

International mobilization and cooperation in these areas are more necessary than ever. Through its experience as a multilateral organization, UNESCO has been contributing for the past year to this mobilization and coordination of the action of the international community for the Ukrainians.

## A mandate from its Member States to act

The 58 Member States of UNESCO's Executive Board, representing the 193 Member States of UNESCO, held an extraordinary session on 15 and 16 March 2022 to examine the impact and consequences of the situation in Ukraine in all aspects of UNESCO's mandate.

At the end of this meeting, the Executive Board adopted a decision mandating the Director-General of UNESCO to "prepare a programme of emergency assistance for Ukraine to cope with the impact of the aggression with all tools at her disposal in the fields of education, culture, science, communication and information".

President Volodymyr Zelensky  
addressing the 215<sup>th</sup> session of the UNESCO  
Executive Board, 11 October 2022

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# US\$43 million

To date, UNESCO has mobilized more than US\$ 43 million, with the support of its Member States and other partners, to implement concrete actions on the ground, which respond to the needs expressed by professionals and the population.

UNESCO wishes to thank its generous donors: Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium (Flanders), Canada including Quebec, Czechia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, the Global Partnership for Education, Google, Google.org through the Tides Foundation, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Qatar Fund for Development, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Zoller & Fröhlich GmbH.

UNESCO wishes also to thank other key partners including : Asociatia Serviciul Iezuitilor pentru Refugiati din Romania (JRS Romania), European Broadcasting Union, Google, Heritage Emergency Fund, Independent Journalism Center of Moldova, Institute of Ethnology and Social Anthropology at the Slovak Academy of Sciences, ICCROM, ICOMOS, Internews, Museum for Change NGO, National Union of Journalists of Ukraine, Slovak Syndicate for Journalists, Perpetuum Mobile/ Artists at Risk, Reporters sans frontières, Romanian Trade Union of Journalists MediaSind, Tides Foundation, Zoller & Fröhlich GmbH, UNITAR/UNOSAT, UNHCR, the Ukrainian NGO Development Centre 'Democracy through Culture', UNESCO Chair in Science Education in Kyiv, Ukrainian NGO Museum of Contemporary Art and more...



**UNESCO's presence in Kyiv**  
Since September 2022, UNESCO has established a Liaison Officer in Kyiv. Supported by a team of international and national experts, she coordinates the proper implementation of the Organization's actions in Ukraine. This representative is in permanent contact with the Ukrainian authorities and partners on the ground, to identify needs and provide appropriate responses, within the framework of UNESCO's mandate.

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# Protecting heritage and works of art

The protection of cultural heritage in Ukraine is crucial because it is not only a testimony of the past, but also key to future peace and cohesion. Heritage is the bedrock of Ukrainian identity, providing the population with a sense of belonging.

UNESCO's response focuses on all key areas of heritage: advising professionals on how to protect buildings and safeguard living heritage, delivering protective equipment, digitizing works of art and archives, advising the national authorities in updating policies and strategies, delivering protective equipment and materials, digitizing works of art and archives, supporting inventory-making, supporting artists and cultural professionals, integrating living heritage in education, and coordinating the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural property, and assessing damage.

## Damage to Cultural Properties

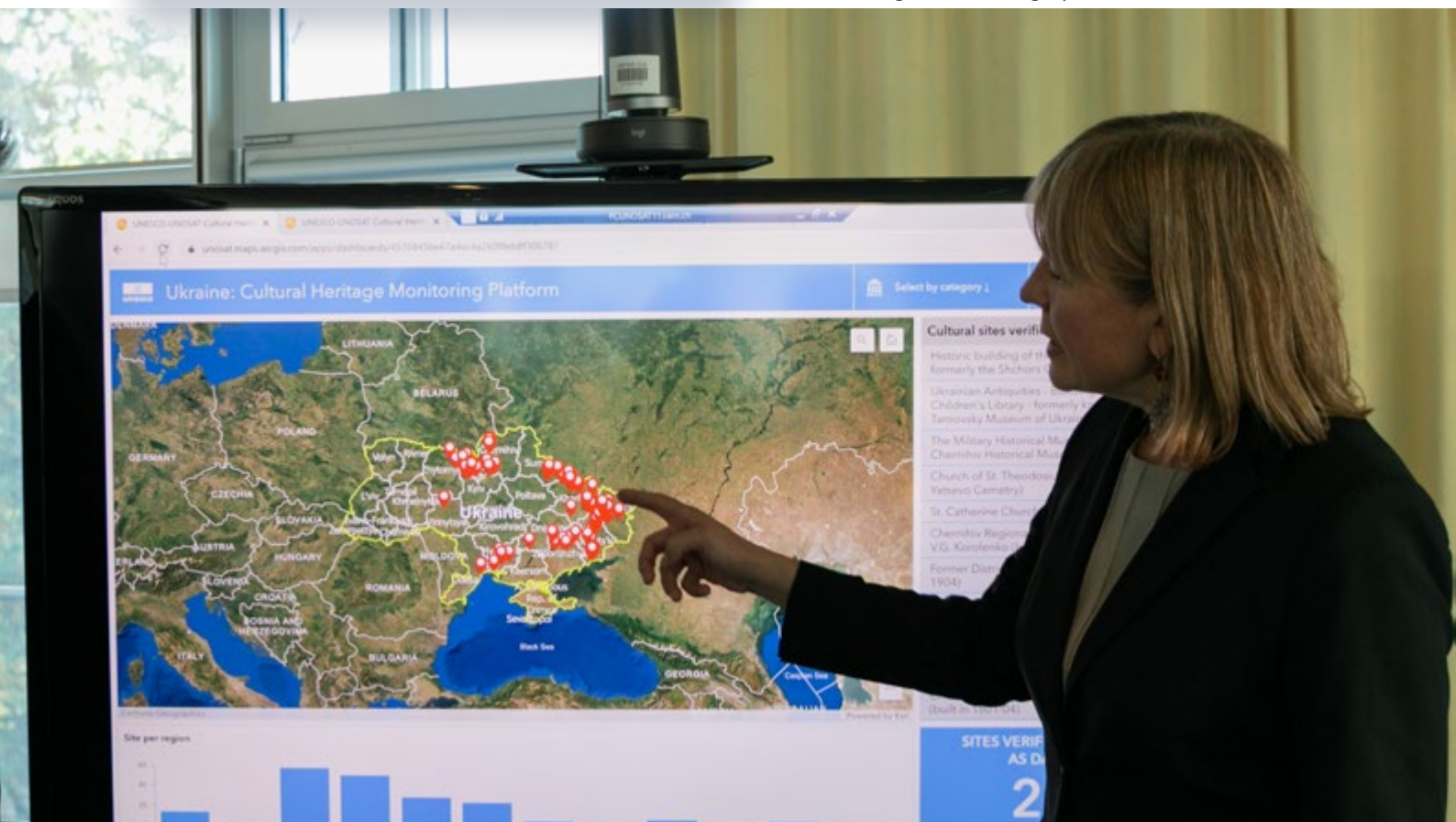
At the beginning of June 2023, UNESCO had confirmed damage to around 260 cultural sites in Ukraine including: museums, monuments, libraries, religious sites, archives, buildings of historical or artistic interest.

## The priority: preventing destruction and looting

From the start of the war, UNESCO experts provided advice to Ukrainian cultural professionals on how to secure buildings, improve fire-fighting systems and identify safe shelters for works of art that could be moved. The Organization has also delivered protective material for the facades of cultural buildings and for outdoor works of art such as statues, as well as electric generators.

UNESCO supports the authorities in marking cultural sites with the Blue Shield emblem of the 1954 Convention, which indicates that these properties are under the protection of international law and that targeting them can lead to prosecution. The Organization also provided urgent repair works for cultural sites, for example in Kharkiv, Kyiv and Odesa. Repairs have already taken place in several cultural institutions, notably the Odesa Fine

In Geneva, October 2022, UNESCO presented its work in damage assessment of cultural properties in Ukraine, using satellite imagery © UNOSAT





## UNESCO emergency measures for Odesa: protecting vulnerable cultural sites

©UNESCO/Ivan Strahov

Arts Museum, Odesa Archaeology Museum, the National Science and Natural History Museum of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, the National Museum “Kyiv Art Gallery”, the Bodhan and Varvara Khanenko National Museum of Arts and the National Museum Taras Shevchenko. Further repairs are planned for the Skovoroda Museum in Kharkiv region.

### Assessing the damage to alert the international community

From the beginning of the war, UNESCO undertook a preliminary assessment of the damage inflicted on Ukrainian cultural property. This analysis is conducted by collecting, cross-checking and studying information on damage from several reliable sources. To further improve this method, UNESCO decided in May 2022 to systematically use satellite images, with the

expertise of UNITAR/UNOSAT. These images allow to verify the exact state of cultural sites, especially when they are currently inaccessible by land, notably when they are located on the front line.

UNESCO created a dedicated online platform to list and georeference all these assessments. These efforts are being supplemented by in situ damage assessments. UNESCO launched a special initiative to document damages: by the Organization trained 65 Ukrainian photojournalists to provide independent photojournalistic coverage of the impact of the war, in partnership with the Institute of Mass Information (IMI) and in coordination with the Ministry of Culture. UNESCO works also with the National Library Association, in close coordination with the Ministry of Culture and Information to create a National Digital Library for the preservation of Ukraine’s documentary heritage.

## A hidden crisis: the illicit trafficking of cultural property

In April 2022, UNESCO and its partners launched an international appeal to prevent the illicit trafficking of Ukrainian cultural property, in the framework of the UNESCO 1970 Convention.

UNESCO focused its advocacy on art sellers and the public concerned by the trade in cultural property, while training professionals, law enforcement agencies and police officers to prevent and dismantle trafficking. From 18 to 20 January 2023 in Warsaw, Poland, UNESCO with its partner Interpol and WCO trained police forces, judicial actors and cultural representatives from Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Ukraine.

The participants learned about the specificities of Ukraine's cultural heritage, in particular religious icons, old coins and archaeological artefacts, as well as items on the ICOM Red List of Cultural Objects at Risk in Ukraine. The training also strengthened networking between countries bordering Ukraine.

## Digitization of collections and support for the digital transformation

The war has revealed the need to strengthen national inventories of cultural heritage in Ukraine to register built heritage, museum collections, including blueprints, photos, and 3D-scanning of buildings and cultural objects. Such inventories and documentation are essential to combat theft, illicit trafficking, and the circulation of fakes, and for the safeguarding and restoration of cultural heritage. To this end, UNESCO supports the digitization of the collections and archives of the Odesa Fine Arts Museum and the Odesa archaeological museum, updating inventories and strengthening the security of the premises.







# Sustaining cultural life and artistic production



Ukrainian signer  
in Borodyanka House of Culture

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In addition to protecting material heritage, UNESCO supports artists and cultural professionals in Ukraine to continue their activities and strengthen their livelihoods: they have an essential role for the cohesion of society, for resilience in the face of tragedies.

## A grant for artists to continue creating in Ukraine

UNESCO provides grants to Ukrainian artists to support the continuation of artistic creation and ensure public access to their production, under a pilot programme launched in partnership with the Ukrainian NGO Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) and the Ukrainian Emergency Art Fund.

Seven cultural projects have been selected through an open tender in Ivano-Frankivsk, Kherson, Kharkov, and Kyiv, with an initial endowment of US\$100,000 from UNESCO. More creative projects are slated to join the nation-wide programme.

## Culture of Ukrainian borscht cooking inscribed on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage

Ukrainian borscht – the national version of a dish consumed in several countries in the region – is an integral part of Ukrainian family and community life. Festivals and cultural events are dedicated to it.

Due to the ongoing war and its negative impact on this tradition, Culture of Ukrainian Borscht Cooking has been inscribed on the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding on 1st July 2022.

This inscription has alerted the international community to this situation and helped stakeholders to implement a dedicated safeguarding action plan with the aim that this traditional practice can continue.

In addition to safeguarding the culture of Ukrainian borscht, UNESCO assessed the need to safeguard other living heritage practices among displaced Ukrainian communities in five neighbouring countries: Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.



Artwork by Vasyl Savchenko, a young Ukrainian artist, on the future UNESCO Culture Hub in Lviv

© Bohdan Yemets

## European hospitality programme for displaced women artists

UNESCO launched a scheme to support Ukrainian women artists who have had to flee their home because of the war, in partnership with the NGO Artists at Risk in July 2022. It enables them and their children to be hosted and cared for by a cultural institution in the country where they have found refuge.

The scheme aims to provide them with the means to become autonomous by the end of their hosting period, whether they then choose to return to live in Ukraine or to settle permanently in their host country. 38 displaced women artists from Ukraine have already received grants and residency in 27 institutions in 13 countries across Europe. A second phase will expand artists' residencies inside Ukraine.

## A UNESCO culture hub soon in L'viv

UNESCO is developing community centres for artists, to facilitate networking for culture professionals, local communities and civil society organizations. The first will be the "Lviv Culture Hub". Its development work began in January 2023, in a historic building in Lviv, thanks to financial support from Spain. It will be an important place for Ukrainian cultural life, hosting events, training, workshops and exhibitions.

# Supporting continuity of education

UNESCO is taking action for the continuity of education and helping teachers and learners in Ukraine. Through its Global Education Coalition, the Organization provided much needed hardware and digital learning content based on critical needs. It is also supporting the national authorities to improve the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support system in Ukraine.

## Reaching out to Ukrainian refugee students

Over 2 million of the 8 million Ukrainians forced to leave their country are children, many of whom have been taken in by educational establishments in neighboring countries.

UNESCO has been mapping host countries' efforts to integrate refugee children into their educational systems, albeit temporarily. Through an online data portal hosted by UNESCO, education stakeholders will be able to learn about normative frameworks and programmes seeking to include displaced learners and personnel into national education system and providing for their needs in terms of language, curricula, and psychosocial support, among others.

The Organization coordinates with the 650 UNESCO Associated Schools in Ukraine and refugee-hosting countries, implementing needs assessments to provide them with contextualized support.

## Providing key equipment and resources

UNESCO delivered over 50,000 Chromebook laptops donated by Google to Ukrainian teachers in need across Ukraine, to help them deliver distance education. This is the largest and most efficient hardware delivery to the sector to date. As a follow-up, UNESCO will train 50,000 teachers on digital pedagogy to support the digital transformation in the education sector.

UNESCO mobilized over 25 Global Education Coalition partners, including Coursera, EdX, Khan Academy and Amazon Web Service, to provide educational platforms, develop digital solutions and translate educational contents for Ukrainian students.

UNESCO also financially supported the development of the prototype system for the National Multidisciplinary Test (NMT), a key university entrance exam, which benefitted 2022 high school graduates. Over 200,000 students graduating from secondary school were able to take the test.



Distribution of Chromebooks to teachers in a school in Kyiv, to help them keep teaching

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## Addressing the impacts of the conflict on learners' mental health

UNESCO is supporting the national campaign led by the First Lady of Ukraine to transform Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services within the education sector. The Organization is playing a critical role in supporting MHPSS actors and activities in Ukraine, and is also training 15,000 school psychologists on conflict-related MHPSS. Based on a comprehensive analysis of the current provision of MHPSS, UNESCO made policy recommendations to the Ministry of Education and Science identifying key actions to improve the system.

## Rebuilding schools and learning facilities

In close cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science vision outlined in the National Recovery Plan, UNESCO aims to support the comprehensive rehabilitation of learning facilities in Ukraine, drawing on previous successful experiences in other emergency contexts, such as the Li Beirut Project.

To start with, UNESCO will support a kindergarten, a UNESCO Associated School (general secondary level) and an individual school library, as requested by the schools and in line with the priorities of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. For this, UNESCO aims to mobilize 5,000,000 USD from donors

## Key figures

### Education in Ukraine before the war

**7,4 million** pupils and students

**674,000** pedagogical staff

### Impact of the war as of January 2023

**+ 3,200** educational institutions damaged

**+ 400** educational institutions destroyed

**+ 1,800,000** students studying online.

*Source: Ukraine Ministry of Education & Science*

## Over \$51 million in grants and in-kind support announced from UNESCO, GPE

In April 2023, UNESCO, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), Google and Microsoft Corporation announced the provision of over US\$51 million for distance learning and psychosocial support for children in conflict-affected areas.

The program implemented by UNESCO includes teacher professional development, mental health and psychosocial support, education planning and management, as well as the procurement and distribution of devices to conflict-affected primary and secondary school-aged learners, including children who have been internally displaced. 6,800 children and more than 60,000 education actors, such as government officials, principals, school psychologists, teachers, parents, and caregivers, will benefit.



UNESCO team meeting students in Kyiv, September 2022

# Promoting reliable information and the safety of journalists

Since the outbreak of the war, UNESCO has worked closely with its partner organizations and Ukrainian journalists' unions to help media professionals, providing equipment, and psychosocial support, and organizing trainings on how to work in danger zones.



## Training and support to journalists in conflict situations

5,000 journalists are accredited to cover the fighting. Many of those on the frontlines have little experience as war correspondents. At the beginning of June 2023, according to UNESCO's Observatory of Killed Journalists, 12 journalists have been killed in the exercise of their profession in Ukraine since 24 February 2022. Many more have been injured. Safety is a major priority in UNESCO's media work, and the Organization has provided reporters and their local "fixers," with safety training and manuals, including first aid and psycho-logical trauma training.

1,100 copies of the UNESCO-RSF's Safety Guide for Journalists translated into the Ukrainian language were distributed to all major media outlets such as UNIAN, Online Media Gordon, National TV, and the Ukrainian National News Agency to journalists throughout the country.

UNESCO has contributed to establishing a network of six Journalists' Solidarity Centres (Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Chernivtsi, Kyiv, Dnipro, and Zaporizhzhia). Operated by the National Union of Journalists of Ukraine (NUJU), they provide legal advice, psychological support, and safety training to journalists. They have provided training to more than 1,700 journalists.

The Organization also provided professional training workshops, a guide and manual on reporting on international crimes and crimes against journalists, training for investigative journalists who report on violations against the media. Training is furthermore provided on professional standards of reporting, fact-checking and analysing publications and photos about the war, as well as safety and protection, notably from radiation.

Further training is planned for journalists and photo-journalists to document and verify war damage to cultural sites and for the information of refugees in neighboring countries (see page 18).

## Distribution of protective equipment provided by UNESCO to journalists in Kyiv

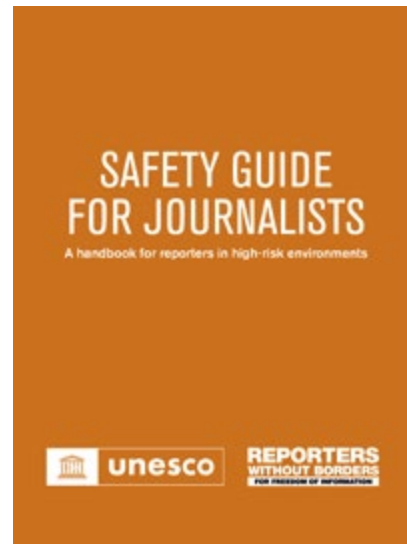
© UNESCO/Mehdi Benchelah

## Equipment and facilities to ensure the continuity of the work

UNESCO has distributed dozens of sets of personal protection equipment (bulletproof vests and helmets) to Ukrainian journalists. UNESCO also supported the relocation of the offices of the NUJU and the Independent Media Trade Union of Ukraine from Kyiv to safer areas within the country. A hotline has been created to help journalists evacuate areas under siege and obtain professional advice and practical resources including shelter and financial assistance.

UNESCO, through its Partners such as the Lviv Media Forum or the Ukrainian Media Business Association, is providing energy equipment to over 40 local and hyperlocal media outlets across the country to allow them to continue working, thereby ensuring access to critical humanitarian information and supporting trainings on media viability.

In addition to training and equipment, Ukrainian journalists need to be supported in terms of financial stability. Many newsrooms can no longer pay their employees because of falling sales and advertising revenue. UNESCO has launched a dedicated project, with the World Food Programme providing over 300 Ukrainian journalists and local media with



a basic income to continue their work of informing the population.

This work is complemented by the regional project "Support for Ukrainian Refugees through Media" in the Republic of Moldova, Romania, and Slovakia. The project, funded by Japan, is developed as part of the Regional Refugee Response Plan for the Ukraine Situation, coordinated by UNHCR. UNESCO is providing support to broadcasters to produce public interest media programmes on key topics of interest and concern to Ukrainian refugees, strengthen ethical reporting and conflict-sensitive journalism in line with humanitarian aid priorities.



# Audrey Azoulay in Ukraine to amplify the reconstruction of the cultural sector

© Ukrainian presidency



In April 2023, Audrey Azoulay, UNESCO Director-General, carried out a mission to Ukraine, with visits to Kyiv, Chernihiv and Odesa, to reaffirm the Organization's support to the population and to advance the reconstruction of the country's cultural sector.

During a working meeting with the Director General, the Ukrainian President welcomed measures already implemented by UNESCO. "Sometimes there are only words. With UNESCO, there are concrete results," he said. The President requested UNESCO to support in the Ukrainian authorities' development of their recovery plan for the cultural sector, while continuing to coordinate and mobilize international actors in the field.

## **\$6.9 billion needed to restore culture**

The Director-General of UNESCO presented figures on the impact of the war on all areas of culture. According to the assessment made by our experts for the first year of the war, physical damages on cultural properties amount \$2.6 billion. Revenue losses for cultural professionals are estimated over \$15 billion, impacting the entire cultural and creative industry of Ukraine.

In order to rebuild but also to redress the situation, it will be necessary to invest \$6.9 billion in the cultural sector in Ukraine over the next ten years.

## **A visit to Odesa sets UNESCO inscription in stone**

Just a few weeks after its inscription on the World Heritage List in danger, Audrey Azoulay also visited the Historic Centre of Odesa and inaugurated an official plaque. This decision recognized the outstanding universal value of the site and the duty of all humanity to protect it.

In recent months, UNESCO implemented emergency measures on the ground to help protect the site, prioritizing the preservation and digitization of artistic and documentary heritage while maintaining the protection of heritage buildings endangered by artillery fire.

UNESCO will launch a vast project to improve the conservation of the city's archaeological museum collections, thanks to the financial support of the Foundation of UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador Marc Ladreit de Lacharrière.





Reparation work in Odesa  
Fine arts museum  
© UNESCO

# UNESCO's mobilization for Ukraine will continue

On 31 January 2023 UNESCO and Japan signed a strategic US\$10 million agreement to extend activities and support to Ukraine in several fields of UNESCO's mandate: education, culture, freedom of expression and the safety of journalist. This makes Japan UNESCO's leading financial partner in Ukraine.

Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO, thanks the Permanent Delegate of Japan, Atsuyuki Oike, for the exceptional support provided by Japan to UNESCO's actions in Ukraine

## Education

Psychosocial support for pupils and teachers. In coordination with the Ukrainian Ministry of Education, UNESCO will deploy professionals from the psychosocial sector to schools and train 20,000 Ukrainian teachers and educators to better identify psychosocial support needs and to discuss these issues with children and their families, to make school a place of resilience.



## Culture and heritage

UNESCO will also increase support to key Ukrainian heritage sites, including those inscribed on the World Heritage List. Four iconic sites will be restored, including the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra. Emergency preparedness plans and full 3D digitization will be developed for ten additional sites.

Some 50 professionals will be trained in emergency stabilization work. Repair works and the delivery of building protection materials will also be increased. A special focus will be given to the strengthening of damage surveillance systems, combining satellite imagery and on the ground monitoring to prepare reconstruction.

## Journalism

Enhanced support for newsrooms. UNESCO will provide psychological support and legal advice to journalists, and increase the number of training courses for media professionals on how to protect themselves in war zones. It will also deliver equipment to newsrooms, in particular electric generators, so they can continue their vital work to inform. Finally, UNESCO will support local media in Moldova, Romania and Slovakia to provide information in the Ukrainian language to refugees in these countries and promote understanding between refugees and host populations.



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Contributions from the many UNESCO Member States that have chosen to channel their support through UNESCO's Multi-donor Programmes have been decisive in strengthening UNESCO's capacity to respond swiftly to emerging needs. These include The Post Conflict Post Disaster sub account set up for Ukraine, the Multi-Donor Programme on Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists, the UNESCO-administered Global Media Defence Fund (GMDF) in its Emergency Response Mechanism, the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), the Heritage Emergency Fund and the Aschberg Programme



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Learn more about  
UNESCO's support  
to Ukraine

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## Cover photo:

Kyiv, Ukraine.

A photo journalist at work.  
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