



PREZYDENT MIASTA KRAKOWA
JACEK MAJCHROWSKI

To the attention of all members of the World Heritage Committee:
Argentina, Belgium, Bulgaria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Greece, India, Italy, Japan, Mali,
Mexico, Nigeria, Oman, Qatar, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Vincent and
the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Thailand and Zambia

Esteemed Members of the World Heritage Committee,

We must safeguard the cultural heritage in Ukraine, as a testimony of the past but also as a catalyst for peace and cohesion for the future, which the international community has a duty to protect and preserve. Recalling the memorable words of UNESCO Director General Audrey Azoulay, as well as the organization's constitution, and acknowledging that deliberate destruction of cultural heritage is considered a crime against humanity, as the Mayor of Kraków – the first European city entered on the UNESCO World Heritage List (1978) and the host of the 41st session of the World Heritage Committee – I call upon you to withdraw the decision to hold the 45th session of the World Heritage Committee in Kazan, Russia, as well as to dismiss the Ambassador of the Russian Federation from his function of the Committee's Chairperson.

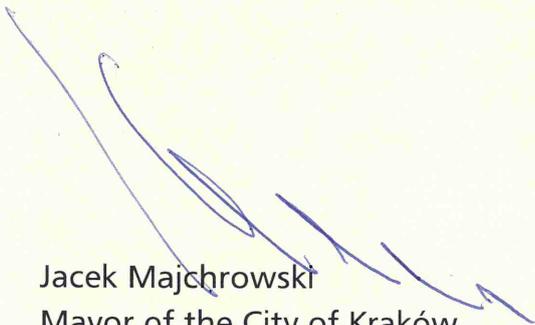
On February 24, the Russian Federation violated the territorial integrity of independent Ukraine by commencing military operations with brutality unseen since World War II. The bombing of cities and villages, crimes committed against the civil population or the blockage of food and medicine supplies remind us of the darkest hours of the 20th century.

In addition to the annihilation of thousands of civilians, including women and children, the Russian Federation ravages buildings of remarkable historic importance, museums, theaters and valuable urban structures. All these components of the common European cultural heritage are irrecoverably destroyed.

The World Heritage Committee, as the key intergovernmental organ safeguarding the Convention's creditability, cannot be chaired by a country that violates its provisions, specifically article 6.3 which reads: *Each State Party to this Convention undertakes not to take any deliberate measures which might damage directly or indirectly the cultural and natural heritage referred to in Articles 1 and 2 situated on the territory of other States Parties to this Convention;* and breaches the fundamental rules set forth in the preamble stating that *deterioration or disappearance of any item of the cultural or natural heritage constitutes a harmful impoverishment of the heritage of all the nations of the world.*

In conclusion, being entrusted with the organisation of a World Heritage Committee session is a privilege to be enjoyed by a country that nurtures universal cultural and natural heritage, supports international cooperation in culture, arts and science and promotes human rights. Since February 24, the Russian Federation has been disrespecting all fundamental values and ideals central to the advancement of international community, its army perpetrating brutal attacks on civilians.

The World Heritage Committee, as an executive organ of the Convention aimed at protecting human heritage, should take a firm stance with the Russian invasion of Ukraine, revoke the plans of holding the 45th Session of the World Heritage Committee in the Russian city of Kazan and renounce the decision to entrust one of the Vice-Chairmen with the Committee's Chairmanship.



Jacek Majchrowski
Mayor of the City of Kraków

Kraków, 8 April 2022