Religion on Fire: Monitoring Damage to Sites of Religious Heritage over the Course of the Russian-Ukrainian War

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Religion on Fire Project

- Conducted by NGO “Workshop for the Academic Study of Religions”
- Field and open source monitoring of religious heritage sites affected by the Russian-Ukrainian war since May 2022
- Fieldwork conducted in three regions, over 70 cities visited, over 180 buildings inspected
- Open source data brings number of sites monitored to over 450
- Work is ongoing
Map of the Invasion: March 2022 to April 2023
What does damage look like?

Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Vyazovka, Zhytomyr region
No restoration efforts underway
Degree of Damage of Religious Buildings

- More than 75% of building is damaged, can not be reconstructed
- 45-75% of the building is damaged, can not be used
- 15-45% of the building is damaged, needs to be repaired
- Building damaged up to 15%, can be used

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Damage Level</th>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Heavy</th>
<th>Complete destruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Can be used</td>
<td>Needs to be repaired</td>
<td>Can not be used</td>
<td>Complete destruction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend:
- Weak: Damage up to 15%
- Medium: Damage 15-45%
- Heavy: Damage 45-75%
- Complete destruction: Damage more than 75%
Damaged or Destroyed Religious Buildings in Ukraine
Quantity of damaged religious buildings (regions of Ukraine)
## Religion on Fire

Objects destroyed and damaged in Ukraine due to Russian war since 24.02.2022 till 23.01.2023 at least

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ukrainian Orthodox (Moscow Patriarchate)</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthodox Church of Ukraine</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek and Roman Catholic</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious education institutions</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other religions objects</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Made by Workshop for the Academic Study of Religions
Quantity of damaged religious buildings (religious affiliation)

- Judaism: 3.5%
- Islam: 1.6%
- Protestantism: 33.0%
- Catholicism: 1.6%
- OCU: 7.7%
- UOC MP: 50.5%
Documentation purposes

- War crimes
  - Defined as: damage or destruction of a religious building; use of a religious building for military purposes; looting and persecution of believers during occupation
  - Monitoring materials given to police and Ukrainian security services to prepare for prosecution

- Reconstruction efforts
  - No resources for reconstruction from the government: low priority
  - No architectural expertise on site
  - Mostly self-driven by communities
  - Sometimes with the help of other religious communities
Potential for Reconstruction: Self-Conducted

Church of St. George
Zavorichy village, Kyiv region
Before
Church of St. George: After and Current
Potention for Reconstruction: Aid from Other Communities

Pokrovska church (denomination: Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia; ROCOR)
Malyn, Zhytomyr region
Restoration conducted with help from Bulgarian co-believers
Conclusions

- Since May 2022, Religion on Fire has conducted a monitoring of approximately 450 sites of religious heritage, primarily in the liberated regions of Central Ukraine (physical monitoring) and Eastern Ukraine (via reports).
- Of the sites monitored, approximately half suffered medium or heavy damage, or were completely destroyed.
- Most sites are 19th century, many are wooden architecture.
- 50.5% of the damaged sites belong to the Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchy, even though part of the pretext for this war is the defense of Orthodoxy.
- Sites belonging to religious minorities (especially Protestants) are damaged to a disproportionately large degree.
- Reconstruction efforts from the state likely not forthcoming; no resources.
- Members of religious communities reconstruct sites themselves or with the help of other religious communities.
- No architectural expertise or oversight usually present: none available.