

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



RELIGION ON FIRE

Kateryna Zorya

Södertörns hogskola

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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?

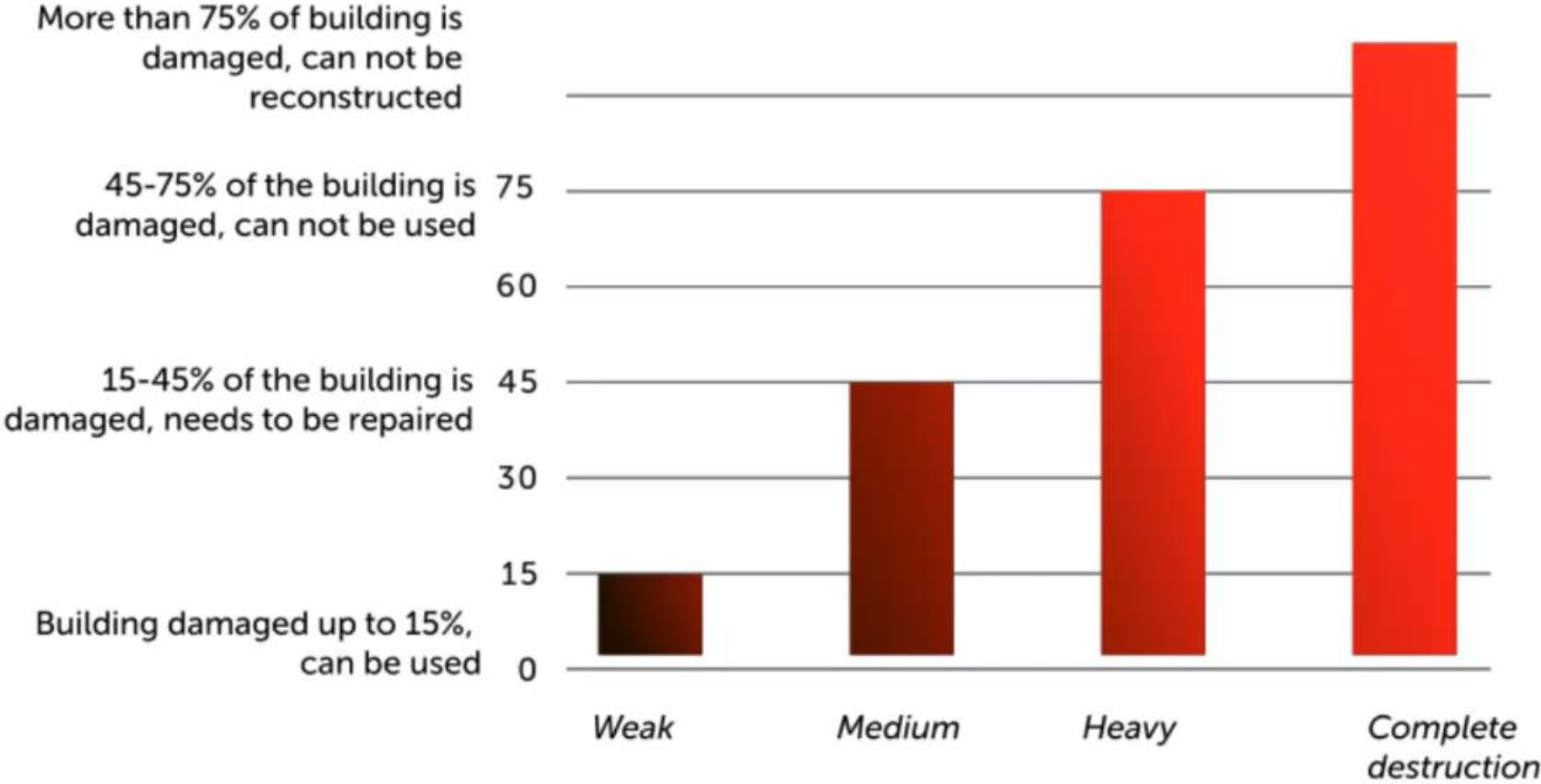


Church of the Nativity of the
Blessed Virgin Mary

Vyazovka, Zhytomyr region

No restoration efforts
underway

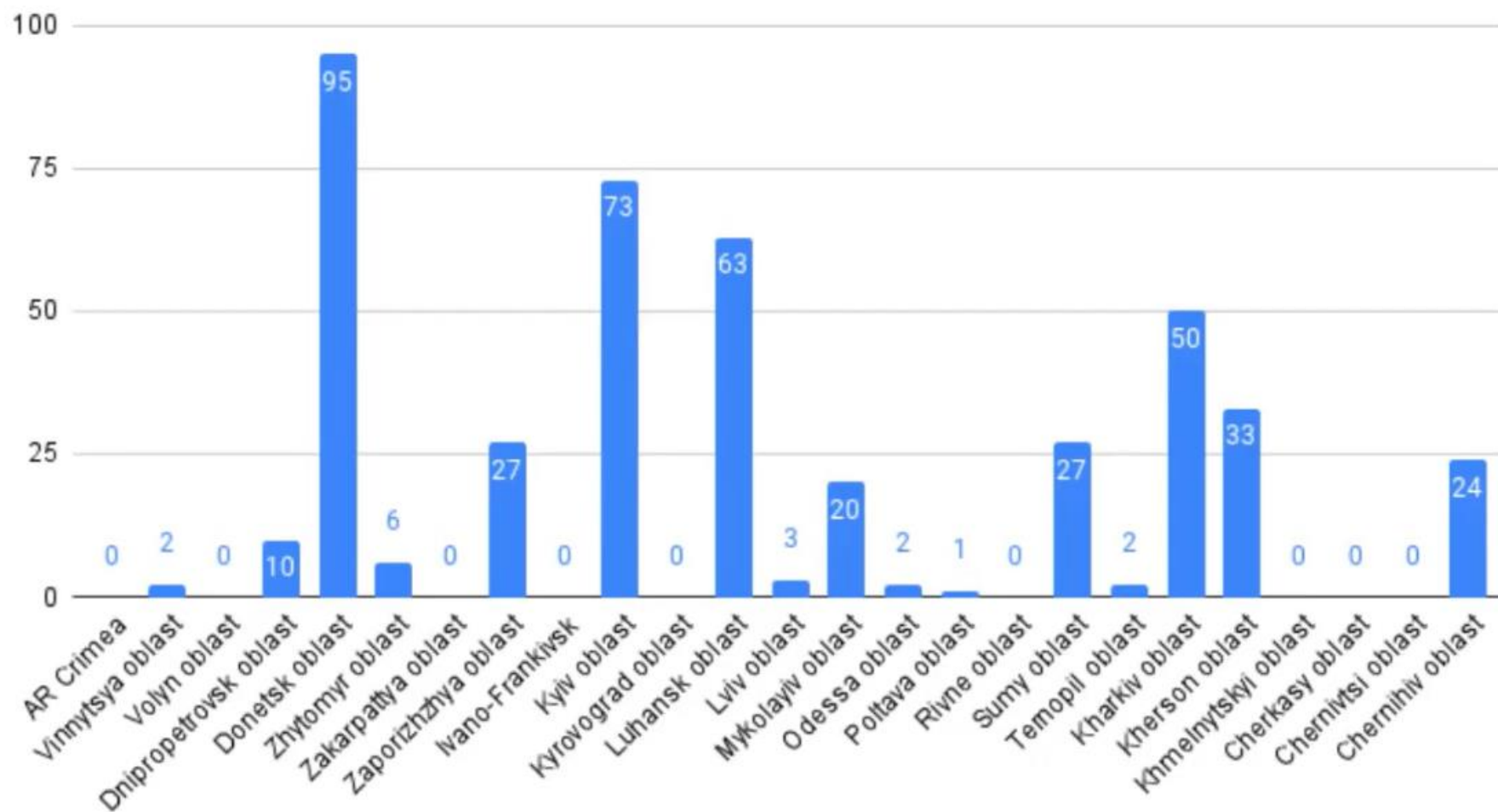
Degree of Damage of Religious Buildings



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**



Ukrainian Orthodox
(Moscow Patriarchate)

197



Islamic

6



Orthodox Church of
Ukraine

29



Jewish

15



Greek and Roman Catholic

9



Religious education
institutions

7



Protestant

133



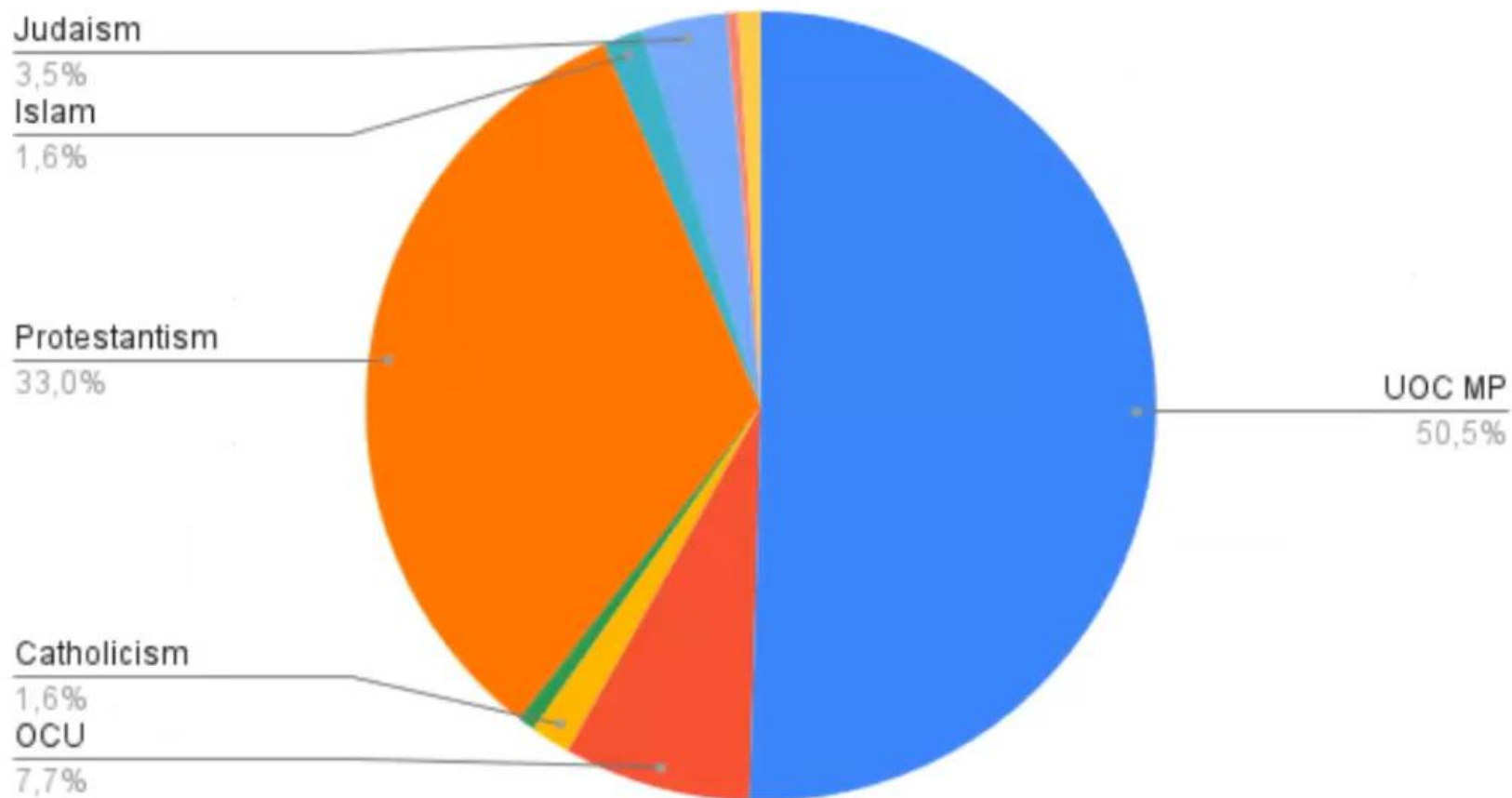
Other religions objects

4



Made by Workshop for the Academic Study of Religions

Quantity of damaged religious buildings (religious affiliation)



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

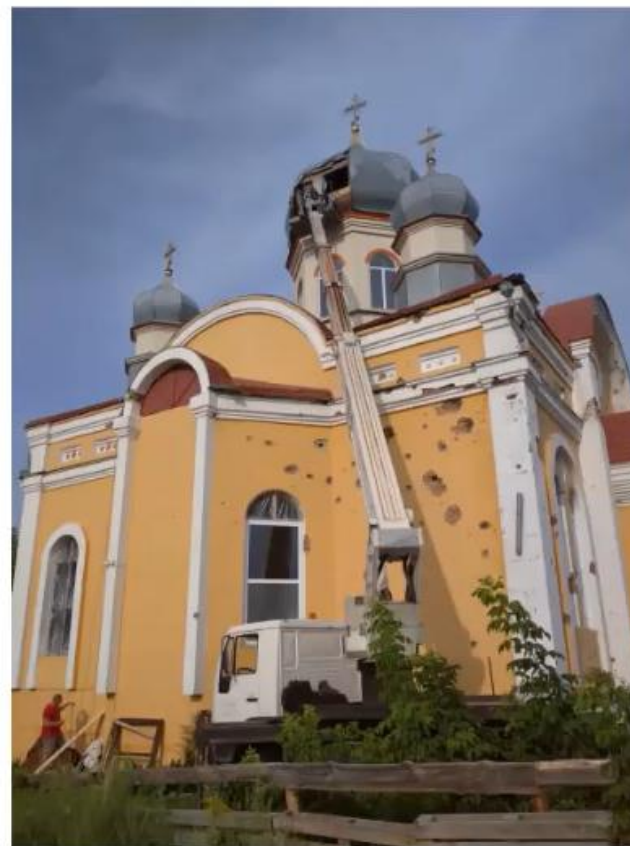


Potention for Reconstruction: Aid from Other Communities

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