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The Foundation to Preserve Ukraine's Sacral Arts, ICOMOS and World Monuments Fund deliver fire extinguishers to protect Ukraine's wooden churches

Press Release – 11 July 2022

WASHINGTON/ PARIS – The [Foundation to Preserve Ukraine's Sacral Arts](#) and the [International Council on Monuments and Sites](#) (ICOMOS), in partnership with [World Monuments Fund](#) (WMF), delivered 440 water-mist fire extinguishers for the protection of historic wooden churches, or *tserkvas*, in war-ravaged Ukraine. Ukraine is home to more than 2,500 wooden churches, the largest number in the world. Eight of the historic wooden churches are included on the UNESCO World Heritage List of *Wooden Tserkvas of the Carpathian Region in Poland and Ukraine*.

Wooden churches are often located in remote rural communities and are particularly vulnerable to fire, especially in extreme conflict situations. The project will allow for the protection of around 200 historic wooden churches in Ukraine, in the most dangerous areas. Water-mist fire extinguishers are suitable for the interiors of wooden churches as they atomize the pressurized water into a fine mist, which evaporates, minimizing potential damage to fragile painted surfaces, authentic fabrics, frescoes, icons and iconostases, and other artistic objects in the interior of churches.

As part of an international support effort, the water-mist fire extinguishers were sourced by the Foundation to Preserve Ukraine's Sacral Arts and ICOMOS from the fire safety provider [Safelincs](#) in the UK, thanks to the support from World Monuments Fund's Ukraine Heritage Response Fund. Safelincs further provided the equipment below cost price, donated accessories and covered transport costs across Europe to Poland, allowing the delivery of a significantly larger number of extinguishers than would otherwise have been possible. [The Polish Committee for Ukrainian Museums](#), through the Warsaw Rising Museum and Instytut Pawła Włodkowica, supported transport logistics and provided warehousing in Warsaw, Poland, and organized with the [Center to Rescue Ukraine's Cultural Heritage](#) onward transport by truck to Lviv, Ukraine.

The extinguishers will be distributed by the Center to Rescue Ukraine's Cultural Heritage based in Lviv, the [Heritage Rescue Emergency Initiative](#) (HERI) based in Kyiv, and [ICOMOS Ukraine](#).

In addition to the wooden churches on the UNESCO World Heritage List, fire extinguishers will be distributed to other wooden churches in order of priority, as determined by the above parties, according to their level of significance (international, national, regional, etc.) and impending threats. Instructions and advice on their use prepared by heritage professionals on an international collaborative crisis platform set up under the aegis of the UK-based [Institute of Conservation \(ICON\)](#) has been translated into Ukrainian, and will be distributed with the fire extinguishers and made [available online](#). Participants on the platform also provided advice on suitable extinguishers during the sourcing process.

[The Foundation to Preserve Ukraine's Sacral Arts](http://www.ftpusa.org) is a nonprofit public charity based in Washington, D.C., dedicated to the preservation of Ukraine's churches. Its mission is to train local craftsmen to preserve Ukrainian churches and sacral arts, and to serve as a catalyst for transferring expertise on heritage protection to forgotten and less fortunate communities, and this guides its work.
www.ftpusa.org

[The International Council on Monuments and Sites](http://www.icomos.org) (ICOMOS) is a non-governmental, not for profit international organisation, committed to furthering the conservation, protection, use and enhancement of the world's cultural heritage. With over 11,000 members, 100+ National Committees, 30 International Scientific Committees and several Working Groups, ICOMOS has built a solid philosophical, doctrinal and managerial framework for the sustainable conservation of heritage around the world. As an official advisory body to the World Heritage Committee for the implementation of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, ICOMOS evaluates nominations and advises on the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List. ICOMOS is a founding member of the Blue Shield. Since the start of the war, ICOMOS has assisted UNESCO, cooperated with its partner organisations and mobilized its Committees to provide support to the Ukrainian cultural heritage community. ICOMOS Ukraine, its national committee in Ukraine, is a founding member of the Center to Rescue Ukraine's Cultural Heritage based in Lviv.
www.icomos.org

[World Monuments Fund](http://www.wmf.org) (WMF) is the leading independent organization devoted to safeguarding the world's most treasured places to enrich people's lives and build mutual understanding across cultures and communities. The organization is headquartered in New York City with offices and affiliates in Cambodia, India, Peru, Portugal, Spain and the UK. Since 1965, our global team of experts has preserved the world's diverse cultural heritage using the highest international standards at more than 700 sites in 112 countries. Partnering with local communities, funders, and governments, WMF draws on heritage to address some of today's most pressing challenges: climate change, underrepresentation, imbalanced tourism, and post-crisis recovery. With a commitment to the people who bring places to life, WMF embraces the potential of the past to create a more resilient and inclusive society. World Monuments Fund recently launched the Ukraine Heritage Response Fund with seed funding of \$500,000 from the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation to address the immediate critical needs of heritage professionals in the country and to lay the groundwork for future rehabilitation.
www.wmf.org

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