



## **Statement of the Institute Heritage Studies on Russia's invasion against Ukraine**

The Institute Heritage Studies, a non-profit organisation, which has set itself the task of sustainably protecting the heritage of humanity worldwide, strongly condemns Russia's military invasion against Ukraine. We are outraged at the massive loss of human life and the destruction of Ukraine's physical infrastructure, which represents its history and identity. All the actions taken by the Russian Federation, mainly those, which are directed against civilians, run against its obligations as a member of the international community represented by the United Nations and they are a crime against humanity. We are concerned about the cultural heritage of Ukraine and the World Heritage properties located on its territory, whose destruction reminds of the fate of other places damaged by Russian troops, such as the Old City of Aleppo and Grosny. The international legal instruments adopted by UNESCO, in particular the Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (1954) and its Second Protocol (1999); the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972) and the Declaration concerning the Intentional Destruction of Cultural Heritage (2003) are more relevant than ever. We further deplore the arresting of peaceful protesters, who stand against the war in the Russian Federation and Belarus, as a violation of their right to freedom of expression and opinion, as well as the manipulation of the Russian media by the state to spread disinformation among its population in order to gather support for its actions. We stand in solidarity with the people of Ukraine and with all those who do whatever stays in their power to stop this war.