

JOINT STATEMENT¹
OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC
COOPERATION
ON THE RUSSIAN ATTACK AGAINST THE KYIV-PECHERSK LAVRA,
A UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE UNDER ENHANCED PROTECTION

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation,

Deeply alarmed by the missile and drone attack launched by the Russian Federation on 15 June 2026 against Kyiv, which struck the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra and caused damage to one of the most revered spiritual, cultural and historical monuments of Ukraine, Europe and the world,

Strongly condemning the damage inflicted upon the Assumption Cathedral (Dormition Cathedral) - the principal shrine of the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra, founded in the eleventh century and one of the oldest spiritual centres of Eastern Christianity, inextricably linked with the origins of Christian civilization in Eastern Europe and the Black Sea region,

Recalling that the World Heritage property “Kyiv: Saint-Sophia Cathedral and Related Monastic Buildings, Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra” has been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List since 1990, was placed on the List of World Heritage in Danger in September 2023 due to the direct threat posed by the Russian Federation’s military offensive, and was granted Enhanced Protection status pursuant to the 1999 Second Protocol to the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict on 7 September 2023,

Recalling further that the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, to which the Russian Federation is a party in legal succession of the Soviet Union, establishes a binding prohibition on acts of hostility directed against cultural property, a prohibition that also constitutes a norm of customary international humanitarian law binding upon all parties to any armed conflict regardless of treaty ratification,

Deeply convinced that the attack on the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra is not an isolated incident but part of a systemic policy of the Russian Federation aimed at destroying Ukraine’s cultural, religious and national identity - the same policy that manifests itself in the deliberate destruction of churches, monasteries, museums and libraries throughout Ukraine, in the removal of cultural property from occupied territories, and which is subject to appropriate qualification under the norms of international law,

Recognizing that this same system gives rise to other crimes against the Ukrainian people: the systematic destruction of energy infrastructure - power stations, heating and water supply systems - with the aim of depriving the civilian population of warmth, light and water, constituting the deliberate use of cold and darkness as weapons against civilians, as well as the forced deportation of Ukrainian children through filtration camps to Russia and Belarus,

¹ Adopted at the 67th PABSEC General Assembly in Georgia. In favour: Georgia, Hellenic Republic, Republic of Moldova, Republic of North Macedonia, Romania and Ukraine. Abstained: Republic of Azerbaijan and Republic of Türkiye.

where they are placed in facilities and transferred for adoption with the aim of destroying their national identity,

Recalling that the UN Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine officially established in October 2025 that the actions of the Russian armed forces constitute crimes against humanity, including murder and the forcible transfer and deportation of civilians, and that the International Criminal Court has issued arrest warrants for the President of the Russian Federation and other senior officials for war crimes, including the unlawful deportation of Ukrainian children,

Concerned that in December 2025 the Russian Federation convicted in absentia the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court and eight of its judges, thereby seeking to undermine international justice, intimidate those investigating its crimes, and entrench a culture of impunity - constituting a direct threat to the entire international system for the protection of human rights and cultural heritage,

Alarmed by the documented facts of the removal by the Russian Federation of cultural property from the occupied territories of Ukraine, which constitutes direct plunder of cultural heritage and a separate crime under the norms of international humanitarian law,

Aware that the ongoing aggression of the Russian Federation is the primary obstacle to economic cooperation, trade, investment, the development of transport corridors and energy security in the Black Sea region, thereby undermining the fundamental objectives of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation and the interests of all its member states,

Deeply convinced that the destruction of cultural heritage is inseparable from the daily loss of human life, and that the rockets and drones that kill Ukrainians, destroy their homes and obliterate monuments of humanity receive critical components through grey schemes of dual-use exports operating in circumvention of international sanctions regimes,

Emphasizing that if the strike against the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra constitutes a crime against a sacred site and against the heritage of all humanity, then condemnation alone is not sufficient - such condemnation must be inseparable from the unequivocal denunciation of the aggression itself, from the mandatory and consistent enforcement of sanctions policy, and from the active prevention of grey dual-use export schemes that supply the Russian war machine,

Emphasizing also that nuclear threats by the Russian Federation constitute an unacceptable instrument of pressure upon the international community and cannot serve as a shield for war crimes and crimes against the cultural heritage of humanity,

Underlining that this Statement reflects the shared responsibility of the PABSEC member parliaments and their commitment to the protection of cultural and religious heritage and to the principles of international law,

1. Strongly condemns the Russian missile and drone attack of 15 June 2026 against the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra as a serious violation of international humanitarian law, including the obligations binding upon the Russian Federation under the 1954 Hague Convention, and regards this attack as an integral part of a systemic policy of destruction of Ukraine's cultural and religious identity;
2. Qualifies the systematic attacks against cultural sites, churches, monasteries, museums and libraries throughout Ukraine as a deliberate policy of destruction of Ukraine's cultural and religious identity, inseparable from the other crimes of the same system -

energy terror against the civilian population and the forced deportation of Ukrainian children - which is subject to appropriate qualification under international law, including the norms on individual criminal responsibility;

3. Expresses deep concern over the damage inflicted upon a monument enjoying the highest level of international legal protection, and notes that the attack was carried out notwithstanding the explicit international recognition of the exceptional vulnerability of this site reflected in its inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger in 2023;
4. Underlines that condemnation alone is not sufficient - it must be inseparable from the unequivocal denunciation of the entire system of crimes: attacks on cultural heritage, energy terror, deportation of children and filtration camps - and that no military justification, nor nuclear blackmail, can excuse these crimes against the civilian population and the heritage of humanity;
5. Condemns the prosecution by the Russian Federation of the Prosecutor and judges of the International Criminal Court as a direct attack on international justice and a deliberate attempt to entrench a culture of impunity, and underlines that the undermining of international accountability mechanisms is an inseparable part of the same system of crimes;
6. Emphasizes that the ongoing aggression of the Russian Federation is the primary obstacle to economic development, trade, investment, the functioning of transport corridors and energy security in the Black Sea region, and that the restoration of peace is a prerequisite for the resumption of full economic cooperation among the BSEC member states;
7. Emphasizes that an effective sanctions policy and the closing of grey dual-use export schemes are not only a legal but also an economic imperative - the only effective instruments for depriving the Russian war machine of the resources required to continue its aggression - and that any facilitation, direct or indirect, of the supply of critical components to the Russian Federation in circumvention of international sanctions regimes must be regarded as complicity in crimes against humanity and world culture;
8. Condemns the removal by the Russian Federation of cultural property from the occupied territories of Ukraine as direct plunder of cultural heritage constituting a separate crime under international humanitarian law, and demands the immediate return of all removed property;
9. Calls upon the UNESCO World Heritage Committee and the Committee for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict to convene extraordinary sessions, conduct a comprehensive international assessment of the damage inflicted, and adopt concrete decisions identifying the responsible party;
10. Expresses solidarity with the Ukrainian people, who daily lose their citizens and children, live without warmth and light under attacks on energy infrastructure, and witness the destruction of their cities and sacred sites, and supports their efforts to preserve, protect and restore their cultural and spiritual heritage;
11. Calls upon the Russian Federation to immediately cease its aggression against Ukraine, withdraw its military forces from the internationally recognized territory of Ukraine, return all deported Ukrainian children, and fully comply with its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations, international humanitarian law and international law,

including the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict;

12. Reaffirms that peace, the protection of human life, conditions for economic cooperation and the preservation of cultural and religious heritage are inseparable objectives of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, and that none of these objectives can be achieved in conditions of ongoing aggression;
13. Declares that nuclear blackmail cannot serve as a shield for war crimes and does not exempt from international legal responsibility; that any facilitation - direct or indirect - of the supply of weapons that destroy human lives and the cultural heritage of humanity in circumvention of international sanctions regimes constitutes complicity in these crimes; and that deliberate attacks against sites under the protection of UNESCO and the Enhanced Protection regime are crimes against all of humanity and can never be tolerated.