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## **The role of museums in the context of a crisis: ICOM organises a training seminar for museum professionals in West Africa**

**ICOM, the Smithsonian Institution and the National Museum of Mali are holding a regional training seminar for West African Museum Professionals on The Role of Museums in the Context of Crisis in the National Museum of Mali, Bamako, from 27 to 31 January, 2014. This training seminar is organised in collaboration with the Malian Ministry of Culture, with the participation of the French Ministry of Culture and Communication, and with support from UNESCO.**



Following the events that shook Mali in 2012 and their devastating consequences for the country's cultural heritage, ICOM, the Smithsonian Institution and the National Museum of Mali, are holding a regional training seminar for West African Museum Professionals on The Role of Museums in the Context of Crisis in the National Museum of Mali, in Bamako, from 27 to 31 January 2014. The training seminar was

developed by ICOM, thanks to the generous support of the Smithsonian Institution, and aims to improve the emergency preparedness of museums in this West African sub-region.

This regional training is part of the action plan developed in February 2013 in order to safeguard the cultural heritage of Mali. During that period, the north of the country was under occupation and its cultural heritage suffered destruction at the hands of armed groups. The training seminar counts therefore the participation of the French Ministry of Culture and benefits from the direct support of UNESCO.

The five-day seminar is attended by around 30 museum professionals from Mali, Togo, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Mauritania, Niger, Burkina Faso and Guinea. Participants will discuss a diverse range of subjects, from how to keep operations afloat during a military operation to disaster risk reduction for museums in conflict, including the methodology to develop a disaster plan. Included in the seminar are sessions entitled *Exhibition and programme development*, *and community engagement*, *Museum security and safety*, *Illicit traffic in cultural goods* and *The contribution of the international heritage community*.

As one of the four founding bodies of the [International Committee of the Blue Shield](#) (ICBS), ICOM places the protection and promotion of cultural heritage in times of armed conflict at the heart of its programmes. This regional training seminar for West African museum professionals on the role of museums in the context of crisis is part of ICOM's international public service missions.