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## RedList

## قائمة حمراء

## ICOM



# EMERGENCY

## RED LIST OF SYRIAN CULTURAL OBJECTS AT RISK



INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF MUSEUMS  
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MUSEES  
CONSEJO INTERNACIONAL DE MUSEOS

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## *Press release*

**Paris, 23 September 2013**

### **ICOM officially announces the publication of the *Emergency Red List of Syrian Cultural Objects at Risk***

Following the events that have shaken Syria for the past two years, and ever mindful of the rising threat that armed conflicts pose to the safeguarding of movable cultural heritage, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) has decided to publish a new Emergency Red List: *The Emergency Red List of Syrian Cultural Objects at Risk*.

As reports of widespread damage and looting at cultural heritage sites in Syria became available, ICOM decided to publish the *Emergency Red List of Syrian Cultural Objects at Risk* with the aim to help art and heritage professionals and law enforcement officials identify Syrian objects that are protected by national and international legislations.

The ICOM Red Lists aim to help customs and police officials, as well as other professionals concerned by the smuggling and illicit trading in cultural objects, fight against the illicit traffic of cultural goods. In order to facilitate identification, they illustrate the categories or types of cultural items that are most likely to be illegally bought and sold.

The Red List will be officially presented at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York on Wednesday 25 September 2013 at 3 p.m.

ICOM is grateful to the leadership of The Metropolitan Museum of Art for making it possible to hold this important Red List launch at the museum, and to the U.S. Department of State for sponsoring this event.

The launch will take place in the presence of the Director General of UNESCO, Ms. Irina Bokova; the Director and CEO of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Dr. Thomas P. Campbell; and of U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees, and Migration, Ms. Anne Richard. The President of ICOM International, Prof. Dr. Hans-Martin Hinz, will officially represent the organisation on this occasion, and will introduce the Syrian Emergency Red List to the attendees.

In its aim to best cover the diversity of Syrian cultural heritage, the Red List presents categories of objects born from the different cultures that have called Syria home over the past millennia. The types of objects

*“The ICOM Red Lists help identify the types of objects that are most susceptible to illicit trafficking and therefore subject to smuggling and illicit trade”*

*“Any cultural object that could have originated in Syria should be subjected to detailed scrutiny and precautionary measures”*

*“Fighting the illicit trafficking of cultural goods is preserving the invaluable witnesses of a country, and humankind’s, evolution, history and artistic expression”*

presented are tablets, statues, containers, architectural elements and jewellery. Due to the great diversity of objects, styles and periods, the *Emergency Red List of Syrian Cultural Objects at Risk* is far from exhaustive. Any cultural object that could have originated in Syria should be subjected to detailed scrutiny and precautionary measures.

Museums, auction houses, art dealers and collectors are encouraged not to acquire such objects without having carefully and thoroughly researched their origin and all the relevant legal documentation.

ICOM’s commitment to the protection of heritage is exemplified through two of its Technical Committees: The Disaster Relief Task Force for museums (DRTF), who monitors and reports on possible risks and existing damage to heritage in emergency situations, and the Ethics Committee (ETHCOM), who advises ICOM in all matters related to museum professional ethics.

Through the work of its Committees, constant contact with the international community and diverse programmes, ICOM reiterates and upholds its firm commitment to the protection of cultural heritage in emergency situations.

*This Emergency Red List was developed with the generous support of:*



*U.S. Department of State  
Bureau of Educational  
and Cultural Affairs*

**Press Contact**

For all matters or interviews regarding ICOM, its fight against illicit traffic in cultural goods and *Red Lists of Cultural Objects at Risk*, please contact the ICOM Press Service: [icom.presse@icom.museum](mailto:icom.presse@icom.museum) / Tel: +33 (0)1 47 34 05 00



## *Syria's cultural heritage*

*“Syria is home to the material remains of a vast range of cultures that have been preserved and protected for many millennia”*

Syria is home to the material remains of a vast range of cultures that have been preserved and protected for many millennia.

Events shaking the Arab region have triggered a wave of concern regarding cultural heritage in Syria. The threat of long-lasting damage to Syrian cultural heritage sites is especially worrisome. Objects from archaeological sites are highly coveted in the international art and antiquities markets and therefore subject to theft, looting and illicit trafficking.

Syria's diverse cultural heritage is reflected in the plurality of its national character. The ongoing destruction of sites and disappearance of cultural objects impoverishes our knowledge and understanding of Syrian cultural heritage and its many and varied contributions to world heritage.

Theft, looting, and illegal trade and export are constant threats to the preservation of national heritage. Fighting the illicit trafficking of cultural goods is everyone's responsibility in preserving the invaluable witnesses of both the country and humankind's evolution, history and artistic expression. The fight against illicit traffic in cultural goods requires the enhancement of legal instruments and the use of practical tools disseminating information, raising public awareness, and preventing illegal export.

The *Red List* helps art and heritage collectors, professionals and customs and police officials identify Syrian cultural objects. Museums, auction houses, art dealers and collectors are encouraged not to acquire these without having carefully and thoroughly researched their origin and all the relevant national and international legal documentation.



## *The Emergency Red List of Syrian Cultural Objects at Risk*

In order to make the *Emergency Red List of Syrian Cultural Objects at Risk* as pertinent, concise and clear as possible, ICOM Programmes Department worked closely with national and international experts on Syrian art history and archaeology.

ICOM thanks the invaluable help of the experts who contributed to the *List*, without whom its publication would not have been possible. These are, in alphabetical order:

**Ali Othman**, Research Assistant at the Louvre Museum, France

**Astrid Nunn**, Supernumerary professorship for Near Eastern Archaeology at the University of Würzburg's Department of Ancient Cultures, Germany

**Augusta McMahon**, University Senior Lecturer at the University of Cambridge's Faculty of Archaeology and Anthropology, United Kingdom

**Danielle Stordeur**, Research Director at the National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS), France

**Eric Gubel**, Curator at the Royal Museums of Art and History's Antiquities Department, Belgium

**Hamam Saad**, Co-director of Syrian Archaeological excavations, Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums (DGAM), Syria

**Ghayad Daoud**, Archaeologist at the University of Paris 1 – Panthéon Sorbonne, France

**Jean-Baptiste Yon**, Researcher at the University of Lyon 2, Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée - Jean Pouilloux, France

**Mammoun Abdulkarin**, Director General of Antiquities and Museums at the Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums (DGAM), Syria

**Michel Al-Maqdissi**, PhD at Saint-Joseph University, Lebanon

**Pascal Butterlin**, Professor of Oriental archaeology at the University of Paris 1 – Panthéon Sorbonne, France

*"In order to make the Emergency Red List for Syria as pertinent, concise and clear as possible, ICOM Programmes Department worked closely with national and international experts on Syrian art history and archaeology"*

*“8,000 printed copies, in four languages, will be distributed around the world”*

*“The Emergency Red List of Syrian Cultural Objects at Risk can be downloaded free of charge from ICOM’s website”*

*“All throughout the preparation and drafting of the List, ICOM and its experts closely monitored and analysed the trends in the black market on cultural objects originating from Syria”*

**Rodrigo Martín Galán**, PhD, Directorate General for Research and Innovation, Unit of International Cooperation with the Mediterranean Neighbourhood Countries (Arab states), European Commission

**Salam Al Kuntar**, Visiting Assistant Professor at the University of Pennsylvania School of Arts and Sciences’ Department of Anthropology, USA

**Shaker Al-Shbib**, Researcher at the University of Paris 1 – Panthéon Sorbonne, France

**Sophie Cluzan**, Heritage Curator at the Louvre Museum’s Department of Oriental Antiquities, France

ICOM wishes to thank all the institutions and people who so generously provided the images of the objects presented in the *Emergency Red List* for Syria:

- Aleppo Museum, Syria
- Bavarian State Archaeological Collection, Germany
- Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums, Syria
- Giorgio Affanni
- Hama National Museum, Syria
- Idlib Museum, Syria
- Maarat al-Nu’man Museum, Syria
- Mari archaeological mission, Syria
- National Museum of Damascus, Syria
- Ras Ibn Hani mission / F. Bernel
- Royal Museums of Art and History, Belgium
- Sophie Cluzan
- Sura Mission / Ali Othman
- Tell Brak project

All throughout the preparation and drafting of the *List*, ICOM and its experts closely monitored and analysed the trends in the black market on cultural objects originating from Syria.

The *Emergency Red List of Syrian Cultural Objects at Risk* will be available in four languages: English, Arabic, French and German. 8,000 printed copies will be distributed to police and customs officials from around the world, as well as heritage professionals, art and antiquities dealers, and other concerned bodies.

Following the official presentation, the *Emergency Red List of Syrian Cultural Objects at Risk* will be available for download free of charge in all languages from ICOM’s website, as well as integrated into ICOM’s complete on-line database dedicated to the *Red Lists*:

<http://icom.museum/what-we-do/resources/red-lists-database.html>

Previous ICOM *Red Lists* are already available at the above address.

## *ICOM's fight against illicit traffic in cultural goods*

### *The fight against illicit traffic*

*“The fight against  
illicit traffic in  
cultural goods is at  
the core of ICOM's  
public service  
mission”*

The fight against illicit traffic in cultural goods is at the core of ICOM's public service mission. ICOM's actions in the field include the publication and dissemination of a wide range of practical tools.

Furthermore, ICOM has developed an important collaborative network of national and international experts and professionals, all dedicated to the protection and promotion of cultural heritage. This network supports and strengthens the global fight against smuggling and illicit trading of cultural objects in various countries.

In 2013, ICOM created the first International Observatory on Illicit Traffic in Cultural Goods, once more formally placing the fight against this trend at the heart of its programmes.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** ICOM wishes to underline that national authorities are the only bodies authorized to deliver permits for the export or import of cultural goods. Neither ICOM nor its international partners issue such certificates or permissions, though police and customs officials regularly intercept fake documents bearing the name and logo of ICOM.

Should you be confronted to such a situation, please do not hesitate to contact us at:

[illicit-traffic@icom.museum](mailto:illicit-traffic@icom.museum)



## *Conventions and cooperation*

*“ICOM actively encourages the enhancement and development of appropriate legislation protecting cultural artefacts”*

*“ICOM is a member of the expert network of international organisations recognised by the United Nations in the fight against illicit traffic in cultural goods”*

*“ICOM works closely with several national law enforcement agencies”*

### **International conventions**

As an advisor to UNESCO and UNIDROIT, ICOM took part in the development of two international conventions that play a crucial role in protecting cultural heritage against illicit traffic:

- 1970 UNESCO *Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property*: Countries adopting the Convention commit to preventing the purchase of illegally exported cultural goods, prohibiting the import of those stolen from a museum or public institution and seizing and returning stolen or illicitly imported cultural goods upon official request by the country of origin.
- 1995 UNIDROIT *Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects*: Places the responsibility on buyers to ensure that the object they are acquiring has reached the market through legal means.

ICOM actively encourages the ratification of these two conventions as well as the enhancement and development of appropriate national legislation protecting a country's cultural artefacts.

### **National and international cooperation**

ICOM is a member of the expert network of international organisations recognised by the United Nations in the fight against illicit traffic in cultural goods; and is the only heritage body in that group. The five other members of this network are: UNESCO, UNIDROIT, INTERPOL, WCO (World Customs Organization) and UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime).

ICOM signed a Memorandum of Understanding with INTERPOL in 2000, enabling it to directly request inclusion of a missing object in its database of stolen works of art.

ICOM also holds an advisory status at the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and works closely with several national law enforcement agencies such as:

- FBI Art Theft Program and the Department of Homeland Security, United States
- Federal Office of Police (FedPol), Switzerland
- Arma dei Carabinieri, Italy
- Central Office for the fight against traffic in cultural goods (OCBC), France
- Scotland Yard Metropolitan Police - Art and Antiquities Unit, United Kingdom
- Direction of the Fight against crime against goods (DJB) of the Federal Police, Belgium
- Federal Criminal Police Office - Art Crime Unit, Germany

Reinforcing their commitment towards the protection of cultural heritage, ICOM and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2011 and established the Art and Cultural Heritage Mediation Programme. The Programme proposes professional mediation procedures for the settlement of cultural property disputes and any other type of litigation in the cultural heritage sector.



## *ICOM's tools in the fight against illicit traffic in cultural goods*

*“The One Hundred Missing Objects have been successful at recovering stolen goods”*

### **One Hundred Missing Objects**

The *One Hundred Missing Objects* series presents cultural goods that have been stolen and whose disappearance has been reported to the police. All of the artefacts included in the publication are registered in the INTERPOL database.

The series include the following publications:

- *Looting in Angkor* (1993, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition in 1997)
- *Looting in Africa* (1994, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition in 1997)
- *Looting in Latin America* (1997)
- *Looting in Europe* (2001)

The *One Hundred Missing Objects* have been successful at recovering stolen cultural goods and can be directly credited for the return of several objects.

*“The Object ID Standard is an efficient tool used to clearly describe and inventory archaeological, artistic and cultural objects in order to facilitate their identification in case of theft”*

### **The Object ID Standard**

The international standard for Object Identification (Object ID), launched in 1997 by the J. Paul Getty Trust, is an efficient tool used to clearly describe and inventory archaeological, artistic and cultural objects in order to facilitate their identification in case of theft. ICOM has held the worldwide licence to translate, distribute and promote the use of this norm among museum professionals and other concerned parties since 2004.

This international norm is intended to standardise the recording of an object's data. Most importantly, the standard is compatible with the norms of INTERPOL's database, making it easier and quicker to disseminate the information to the world should an object be reported missing.

ICOM proposes capacity-building activities for museum and heritage professionals, government representatives, as well as police and customs agents, on the use of the Object ID Standard and its function in the protection of collections.

*“The number of published Red Lists has greatly increased in the past few years, reflecting ICOM’s commitment towards preventing illicit traffic in cultural goods”*

*“ICOM’s Red Lists have been credited for numerous successful operations by police and customs officials”*

## The *Red Lists*

ICOM’s *Red Lists* are worldwide recognised tools that help heritage professionals, collectors, and most importantly, police and custom officials identify objects protected by national legislation that may have been smuggled or illicitly traded.

The number of published *Red Lists* has greatly increased in the past few years, reflecting ICOM’s commitment towards preventing illicit traffic in cultural goods. ICOM has received requests for the drafting of *Red Lists* from several countries and regions and is currently preparing new publications.

The *Red List* publications are as follows:

- *Red List of African Archaeological Objects*
- *Red List of Latin-American Cultural Objects at Risk*
- *Emergency Red List of Iraqi Antiquities at Risk*
- *Red List of Afghanistan Antiquities at Risk*
- *Red List of Peruvian Antiquities at Risk*
- *Red List of Cambodian Antiquities at Risk*
- *Red List of Endangered Cultural Objects of Central America and Mexico*
- *Emergency Red List of Haitian Cultural Objects at Risk*
- *Red List of Chinese Cultural Objects at Risk*
- *Red List of Colombian Cultural Objects at Risk*
- *Emergency Red List of Egyptian Cultural Objects at Risk*
- *Red List of Dominican Cultural Objects at Risk*
- *Emergency Red List of Syrian Cultural Objects at Risk*

## Future *Red Lists*

ICOM is at the moment drafting the *Red List of West African Cultural Objects at Risk*, which will include a special emergency section highlighting cultural heritage in Mali in response the recent events in the country, and the *Emergency Red List of Libyan Cultural Objects at Risk*.

## *Red Lists* results

ICOM’s *Red Lists* have been credited for numerous successful operations by police and customs officials, regarding identification and seizure of cultural goods. The following are but a few chosen examples:

In 2012, French authorities specifically stated that ICOM’s 2003 *Emergency Red List of Iraqi Antiquities at Risk* helped in the recovery and restitution of 13 Iraqi archaeological objects from the ancient civilization of Mesopotamia, dated from 2350 BC to 1700 BC. The seized objects, cones and clay tablets, were identified by official investigators through an auction website due to their likely Iraqi origins. The seized artefacts were returned to Iraq during a ceremony held in its Embassy in Paris, in the presence of his Excellency the Ambassador of Iraq and official representatives from the French police, the Ministry of Culture and ICOM.

*“The Red Lists also help develop good practices amongst countries”*

In 2011, the National Museum of Afghanistan recognised that the 2006 *Red List of Afghanistan Antiquities at Risk* allowed for the return of 8,000 objects from all over the world. Out of these 8,000 goods, 1,500 (3.4 tons) were specifically seized by customs officials at Heathrow Airport who, between 2007 and 2009, systematically referred to the Afghan *Red List* when an object originating from the region was intercepted.

In March 2006, the *Red List of African Archaeological Objects* allowed for the return of over 6,000 artefacts stolen from archaeological sites in Niger and seized by French customs’ officials in 2004 and 2005.

The *Red Lists* also help develop good practices amongst countries. In 2008, the Iraqi *Emergency Red List* helped confirm the illicit sale of a cuneiform tablet identified by an expert on the Swiss eBay website, the appropriate Swiss authorities were informed and eBay was able to stop the auction just before the sale was concluded. These actions, led to further measures being taken to avoid the transfer on the internet of illegally acquired cultural goods. The British Museum and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council signed a Memorandum of Understanding with eBay which allows them to closely monitor the activities of the site regarding antiquities, contact the sellers and notify the Art and Antiquities Unit of the Metropolitan Police of any non-declared object. Switzerland also signed a declaration of intent with eBay. The online auction platform also cooperates with the Italian Carabinieri.



*“An innovative tool that will contribute to preventing and fighting the illegal trade in cultural property and related crimes at both national and international levels”*

*“An information databank for the network and the public through a Website and a triennial Global Report”*

## The International Observatory on Illicit Traffic in Cultural Goods

In wishing to further contribute to the advancement of the fight against illicit traffic, ICOM has developed a long-term and innovative instrument aimed at overcoming the critical gaps in terms of data and analysis on the issue: The first International Observatory on Illicit Traffic in Cultural Goods.

This Observatory is an international programme dedicated to monitoring and reporting the smuggling and illicit trading of cultural assets. In response to the absence of centralised statistics and the lack of available valid information on illicit traffic in cultural goods, ICOM has created an all-inclusive platform dedicated to information-gathering on different fronts regarding this important issue: data and information analyses, news, interviews, publications, tools and practices, case studies, players involved, etc.

In creating the International Observatory on Illicit Traffic in Cultural Goods, ICOM wishes to start a process of extensive research and reporting, in close cooperation with a wide range of international partners. This strong network of partners will help reinforce the dialogue and cooperation between its diverse members and foster the development of the collaborative platform. The Observatory will provide a space for dialogue and exchange of knowledge and practices.

ICOM's daily monitoring will gather and compile an unprecedented amount of information regarding illicit traffic in cultural goods. The acquired information will be used to implement a dedicated Website, which will disseminate all the information available and act as an activity hub for ICOM and its partners in this fight.

This project is funded by the European Commission for three years and will provide a unique monitoring activity and work analysis leading to the publication of the first Global Report on the worldwide issue of illegal traffic in cultural property.

The Observatory's Website will centralise and disseminate all kinds of resources and instruments relating to illicit traffic in cultural goods and the means to fight it. The Website will provide a transversal approach and cross-sectorial data entries in order to facilitate fluid web-navigation and encourage researches through different bread-crumbing navigation paths. The Website aims at offering a wide range of different data suitable for a varied public: It will allow either for experts to directly access the resource they are looking for, or amateurs and non-professionals to discover and be informed about the issue of illicit trafficking in cultural goods and the type of organisations, practices and tools dedicated to fight it.

*“The ICOM-  
WIPO Mediation  
procedure is open  
to all, including  
non-ICOM  
members”*

## The Art and Cultural Heritage Mediation programme

The current increase in ownership disputes and restitution claims requires finding solutions other than litigation. ICOM’s dedication to the fight against illicit traffic in cultural goods has led it to act in the process of return of cultural assets. ICOM had demonstrated its skills in this issue by offering its good offices, leading to the successful donation of the Makondé Mask to Tanzania by the Barbier-Mueller Museum on May 2010.

The Art and Cultural Heritage Mediation Programme was launched as the result of cooperation between ICOM and WIPO. This fruitful collaboration resulted in the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the two organisations and the official launch of the Mediation Programme in May 2011.

Mediation is a voluntary procedure designed to satisfy the long felt need for specialized alternative dispute resolution. The ICOM-WIPO Mediation procedure is open to all, including non-ICOM members. Those who request mediation from the ICOM-WIPO Mediation Rules benefit from the special joint List of Mediators selected for their skills and their mediation expertise in the art and cultural heritage field.

Mediation has several distinctive characteristics and advantages, and is able to overcome the statute of limitations. It takes into account customary laws for claims such as misuse of traditional cultural expressions.

Mediation under the ICOM-WIPO Mediation Rules is a guarantee of respect for impartiality and independence and of the high ethical standards embodied in the *ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums*. The programme responds to the needs of the world museum community and complements ICOM’s actions in the area of illicit traffic, offering an accessible solution.

ICOM also contributes to the restitution of objects to their countries of origin outside its formal Mediation Programme, thanks to its efficient cooperation with different national entities. It offered its good offices again very recently in facilitating the return of an object to Nigeria.

Art &  
Cultural  
Heritage

Mediation

## *The International Council of Museums*

The International Council of Museums (ICOM), created in 1946 and representing museums and museum professionals, is committed to the promotion and protection of natural and cultural heritage, present and future, tangible and intangible. With 30,000 members in 137 countries, ICOM, with its unique network, is active in a wide range of museum- and heritage-related disciplines.

Maintaining formal relations with UNESCO and having a consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), ICOM works in collaboration with organisations such as WIPO, INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization (WCO) to carry out its international public service missions, specifically regarding mediation, the fight against illicit traffic in cultural goods and the protection of heritage in case of natural disasters or armed conflict. Through its numerous programmes, ICOM has the ability to mobilise expert networks in the field of cultural heritage from all over the world.

With its *Code of Ethics for Museums*, ICOM has created a reference tool that sets standards of excellence to which all institutions and professionals of the organisation must adhere to. The *ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums*, translated into 36 languages, establishes values and principles shared by ICOM and the international museum community.

In 2013, ICOM created the first International Observatory on Illicit Traffic in Cultural Goods, once more formally placing the fight against this trend at the heart of its public service missions.

Supporting the fight against illicit traffic in cultural goods is among ICOM's highest priorities. The *Red Lists* have been designed to fight the illicit traffic of cultural objects from certain countries or regions of the world, thus aiding in protecting these countries' cultural and historical heritage.

ICOM is grateful for the unwavering commitment of the experts and institutions who generously contribute to the success of the *Red Lists*.

*“Supporting the fight against illicit traffic in cultural goods is among ICOM’s highest priorities”*

*“ICOM is committed to promoting and protecting the world’s natural and cultural heritage, present and future, tangible and intangible”*