

Press release

Paris, 27 February, 2015



International Council of Museums (ICOM) is appalled by the intentional destruction of objects from the Mosul Museum in Iraq

In the wake of the devastating images of the intentional destruction of objects from the Mosul Museum, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) is deeply concerned for the safety of museum professionals in Iraq and mourns the loss of invaluable cultural heritage due to this reprehensible attack.

The international museum community shares the pain of the Iraqi people in the face of such brutal assaults on their collective history and identity. When cultural objects of a country disappear, all people are denied a part of their shared history and are taken as hostages alongside the heritage.

The international community must not only strongly condemn the destruction of such an important collection, but must take immediate measures to prevent further deplorable assaults on the culture and history of humankind.

Voluntary destruction of elements of Iraq's millennial culture and history, and those of the broader region, has been occurring for many years. This recent calculated provocation is also an attack on the concept of museums, and a forceful rejection of the ways in which the world approaches and values ancient societies.

Concerned about the frequency of such systematic destruction of heritage, ICOM calls on the responsibility of all for protecting the cultural heritage of the world, of which the ancient royal cities of Nineveh, Nimrud and Hatra in northern Iraq are great vestiges.

These senseless acts are in complete violation of national and international legislation, encompassing the recent United Nations resolution 2199, which condemns the destruction of cultural property and aims to prevent the trade in items of cultural, scientific and religious importance that have been illegally removed from their country of origin during periods of conflict.

For over a decade, ICOM has dedicated itself to emergency preparedness and response for museum professionals and to the protection of Iraqi cultural objects at risk of illicit trade. In this regard, a revised version of the *Emergency Red List of Iraqi Cultural Objects at Risk* will soon be published.

In extending solidarity and support to our colleagues in Iraq, ICOM wishes to further contribute to future capacity-building efforts for museum professionals of the region who could be confronted with such exceptional and tragic situations.

ICOM in short

Created in 1946, ICOM (International Council of Museums) is an international non-governmental organization maintaining formal relations with UNESCO. Within the United Nations, ICOM has a consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. ICOM is the only international organization representing museums and museum professionals on a global level.

About the International Council of Museums (ICOM)

The International Council of Museums (ICOM), created in 1946, is the world organisation of museums and museum professionals. ICOM is committed to promoting and protecting natural and cultural heritage, present and future, tangible and intangible. With more than 30,000 members in 136 countries, the ICOM network is made up of museum professionals from a wide range of museum- and heritage-related disciplines.

ICOM promotes standards of excellence in the museum field, in particular through its *ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums*, a standard-setting tool for museums, which includes basic principles for museum governance, the acquisition and disposal of collections, and rules for professional conduct.

In order to carry out its activities, ICOM partners with entities such as the World Intellectual Property Organization, INTERPOL, the World Customs Organisation, ICCROM, and maintains its long-standing collaboration with UNESCO. ICOM's activities include fighting illicit traffic in cultural goods and promoting risk management and emergency preparedness to protect world cultural heritage in the event of natural or man-made disasters.

The UNESCO-ICOM Museum Information Centre, created in 1946, gathers the most comprehensive collection of ICOM publications including *ICOM News*, *ICOM Red Lists*, publications by ICOM's committees, and conference proceedings.

ICOM's commitment to culture and knowledge promotion is reinforced by its 30 International Committees, which are dedicated to a wide range of museum specialities and conduct advanced research in their respective fields for the benefit of the museum community. The organisation's International and National Committees, Regional Alliances and Affiliated Organisations hold conferences and symposiums worldwide that revolve around pre-defined themes with a view to fostering exchange among museum professionals of all nationalities. In addition, ICOM organises International Museum Day each year, a worldwide event held around 18 May, to increase public awareness of the role of museums in developing society.

Website: <http://icom.museum>

For any matter related to the global museum community:

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