



## Press release

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### ICOM to launch a Red List for Syria

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**In view of the continued escalation of the Syrian conflict and its impact on cultural heritage sites and institutions, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) has launched the creation of an *Emergency Red List of Syrian Cultural Objects at Risk*.**

Julien Anfruns, ICOM Director General, states that “ICOM has been constantly monitoring the situation of Syrian heritage and maintaining updated reports through its permanent unit dedicated to collecting as much information as possible on the state of museums and monuments and closely following events. In the wake of this ongoing work, the *Emergency Red List of Syrian Cultural Objects at Risk* will be a reference tool for action in the protection of Syrian cultural heritage.” This Red List will be drafted in cooperation with a team of specialists, and has received the support of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State.

The ICOM Red Lists are simple and effective tools that facilitate the work of police, customs officials and all other professionals concerned with the protection of cultural property worldwide by helping them identify the categories of objects that are particularly vulnerable to illegal purchase, transaction and export. In a context of conflict, in addition to sustaining diverse criminal activities, the illicit trafficking of cultural goods supports the fraudulent funding of various parties, destroys essential scientific elements critical to the reconstruction of Syrian society, and leaves historical gaps that distort the significance and interpretation of the country’s cultural heritage.

ICOM is also working on Red Lists for West Africa and the Dominican Republic. These three forthcoming Red Lists will be launched in 2013, bringing to a total of 14 the number of Red Lists that have been helping protect cultural heritage around the world for over ten years.

## **ICOM in short**

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

ICOM is:

- A diplomatic forum made up of representatives from 137 countries and territories
- Standards of excellence for museums including ethics (*ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums*)
- A unique international network of more than 30,000 museum professionals around the world
- A think tank made up of 31 International Committees representing diverse museum specialties
- Missions of international public service, notably in the fight against illicit traffic of cultural property and emergency programmes in the event of natural disasters or armed conflicts.

**For all questions concerning the world museum community and for interview requests with ICOM's Director General, please contact the press office:**

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