

**EMERGENCY**

# RED LIST OF IRAQI CULTURAL OBJECTS AT RISK

2015 Update



**ICOM** international  
council  
of museums

# EMERGENCY RED LIST OF IRAQI CULTURAL OBJECTS AT RISK

## *Introduction*

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For decades the world has witnessed the ongoing disappearance of Iraq's diverse cultural heritage. This looting and destruction impoverishes our knowledge and understanding of Iraq's, and the region's, history as well as its many and varied contributions to the world both on a scientific and cultural level.

Following the successful seizures made possible thanks to the 2003 *Emergency Red List of Iraqi Antiquities at Risk*, the first Emergency Red List produced by the International Council of Museums (ICOM), and in view of the persisting threat to the Republic of Iraq's cultural heritage, ICOM concluded that an updated version of the List was necessary. This was effectively carried out with the generous support of the US Department of State.

The *Emergency Red List of Iraqi Cultural Objects at Risk* presents the country's cultural heritage currently threatened by destruction, theft, looting, smuggling and illicit trafficking.

## *Purpose*

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The fight against illicit trafficking in cultural goods requires the enhancement of legal instruments and the use of practical tools disseminating information, raising public awareness, and preventing illegal exportation.

The *Emergency Red List of Iraqi Cultural Objects at Risk* illustrates the categories or types of cultural items that are most likely to be illegally traded. It aims to help art and heritage professionals and law enforcement officials identify Iraqi objects that are at risk and protected by the legislation in force. 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.

Due to the great diversity of objects, styles and periods, the *Emergency Red List of Iraqi Cultural Objects at Risk* is far from exhaustive. Any cultural good that could have originated from Iraq should be subjected to detailed scrutiny and precautionary measures.

# *The cultural heritage of Iraq is protected by the following national legislation and international instruments and agreements:*

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## **NATIONAL LEGISLATION**

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Law No. 55 of 2002 on *Antiquities and Heritage* (18 November 2002).

Constitution of the Republic of Iraq, Article 113 (15 October 2005).

## **INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS**

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The Hague Convention of 14 May 1954 *for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict* (ratified, 21 December 1967) and the first Protocol (ratified, 21 December 1967).

UNESCO Convention of 14 November 1970 *on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property* (accepted, 12 February 1973).

UNESCO Convention of 16 November 1972 *Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* (accepted, 5 March 1974).

United Nations Security Council Resolution 661, Article 3a regarding the import of commodities and products originating from Iraq (6 August 1990).

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1483 (2003) *on the Situation between Iraq and Kuwait* (22 May 2003).

European Union Council Regulation (EC) No. 1210/2003 *concerning certain specific restrictions on economic and financial relations with Iraq, and repealing Regulation (EC) No. 2465/96, Article 3* (7 July 2003).

Charter of the United Nations (Sanctions - Iraq) Regulations 2008, Select Legislative Instrument 2008 No. 45 as amended, Article 9 *on the Return of illegally removed cultural property of Iraq* and Article 10 *on Dealing with illegally removed cultural property* (18 May 2011).

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2199 (2015) *on Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts* (12 February 2015).

## **OTHER LAWS AND REGULATIONS**

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League of Arab States:  
*Riyadh Arab Agreement for Judicial Cooperation* (6 April 1983).

Russian Federation:  
Decree No. 968 *on the measures to implement the UN Security Council resolution 1483 of 22 May 2003* (18 August 2003).

Swiss Confederation:  
By-law of 7 August 1990 *on the Economic measures regarding the Republic of Iraq*, Articles 1a, 2a and 4c, as amended by RO 2003 1887 on 28 May 2003 (25 June 2003).

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland:  
Statutory Instrument 2003 No. 1519, *The Iraq (United Nations Sanctions) Order 2003*, Article 8 (14 June 2003).

United States of America:  
Department of Homeland Security's *Import Restrictions Imposed on Archaeological and Ethnological Material of Iraq*, Committee of the Federal Register (CFR)  
Title 19 regarding Customs Duties: 12.104 - *Definitions* (27 February 1986).

The Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control, Committee of the Federal Register (CFR)  
Title 31 regarding Money and Finance: Treasury  
575.204 - *Prohibited importation of goods or services from Iraq* (2 August 1990).  
575.206 - *Prohibited dealing in property* (9 August 1990).  
575.533 - *Certain new transactions* (23 May 2003).  
576.208 - *Prohibited transactions related to certain Iraqi cultural property* (13 September 2010).  
576.411 - *Prohibited transactions involving certain Iraqi cultural property* (13 September 2010).

Emergency Protection for Iraqi Cultural Antiquities Act,  
H.R. 1047 Miscellaneous Trade and Technical Corrections Act of 2004,  
Public Law 108-429, Title III - *Iraqi Cultural Antiquities*, Sec. 3001-3003 (12 March 2004).

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## *Should you suspect that a cultural object originating from Iraq may be stolen, looted or illegally exported, please contact:*

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**IMPORTANT NOTE:** A Red List is NOT a list of actual stolen objects. The cultural goods depicted are of inventoried objects within the collections of recognised institutions. They serve to illustrate the categories of cultural goods protected by legislation and most vulnerable to illicit traffic. ICOM wishes to thank all of the institutions and individuals who so generously provided the photographs presented in the 2015 Iraqi Emergency Red List.

The objects presented in the *Emergency Red List of Iraqi Cultural Objects at Risk* cover the following periods:

**Ancient Mesopotamia** (Hassuna, Samarra, Halaf, Obaid, Uruk, Early Dynastic, Akkadian, Babylonian, Assyrian periods) > 10,000 – ca. 539 BC

**Mesopotamia or Classical Antiquity** (Achaemenid, Seleucid, Parthian, Roman and Sasanian Empires) > 539 BC – AD 632

**Islamic era** (Rashidun, Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphates) > AD 632 – 1258

**Mongol era** > AD 1258 – 1534

**Ottoman Iraq and Mamluk rule** > AD 1534 – 1831

## Writing

4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC – AD 1258

**Clay or stone tablets:** Circular, square, or rectangular, slightly pillow-shaped. With cuneiform (wedge-shaped) writings. May have inscriptions and/or seal impressions on both sides and/or the borders, and fragmentary sealed casing. Size: 2-20 x 5-30 cm. [1–2–3]

**Manuscripts, books and documents:** Codices, Qur'ans and scientific texts. Paper or parchment, with Aramaic and/or Arabic inscriptions. Often with illuminations. [4]



1. Clay tablet with cuneiform writing, Uruk, ca. 3200 BC, 5.7 x 4.3 cm.  
© Vorderasiatisches Museum – SMB, Berlin / Olaf M. Teßmer



2. Clay tablet with seal impression depicting two goats in front of a building, Ashur, 12<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> c. BC, 6.5 x 6.7 cm. © Vorderasiatisches Museum – SMB, Berlin / Olaf M. Teßmer



3. Clay cylinder in cuneiform writing with the name of Assyrian king Ashurbanipal, Babylon, 7<sup>th</sup> c. BC, Ø 17.6 cm. © Vorderasiatisches Museum – SMB, Berlin / Olaf M. Teßmer



4. Paper folio with ink, gold and opaque watercolours from a *Materia Medica* of Dioscorides showing a physician preparing an elixir, possibly from Baghdad, AD 1224, 33.2 x 24.8 cm.  
© The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

## Stamps and seals

6<sup>th</sup> millennium – 300 BC

Stone, terracotta, shell, bone. Engraved or carved, pierced through its centre or at the top. With geometric or figurative motifs (humans, animals, deities, buildings) in mythological, religious and/or daily life scenes.

**Stamp seals and signet rings:** Stamp seals may be ellipsoidal or animal-, gable- or pyramid-shaped. Rings have a flat top with motifs in relief. Size: pictures 1.5-3 cm, seals 2-4 cm. [5–6]

**Cylinder seals:** May have cuneiform inscriptions. Size: 2-7 x Ø 1-3 cm. [7]



5. Banded calcite ram-shaped stamp seal, Tell Agrab, Uruk Period (ca. 4000 – 3100 BC). © Courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago



6. Ellipsoid carnelian stamp decorated with a scorpion, Sasanian period (AD 224 – 677), 2.4 x 1.9 x 1.3 cm.  
© Musée du Louvre, dist. RMN-Grand Palais, Paris / Raphaël Chipault



7. Lapis lazuli cylinder seal, Babylon, 14<sup>th</sup> c. BC, 5 x Ø 1.6 cm. © Vorderasiatisches Museum – SMB, Berlin / Olaf M. Teßmer





# CULTURAL OBJECTS AT RISK

## Architectural elements

4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC – AD 1258

**Foundation elements > Metal (bronze, silver, gold, alloys) figurines:** Men carrying baskets or vases on their heads, lower body may be peg-shaped; animals; deities with horns and/or crowns. May have inscriptions. Height: 10-20 cm. [8]

**Clay cones:** With flattened base, may have cuneiform inscriptions. Average height: 15 cm. [9]

**Architectural fragments > Pre-Islamic:** Figurative or geometric motifs. Friezes with gold and/or mosaic inlays, coloured tiles and glazed bricks. Sumerian cone mosaics (stone, terracotta) with exposed coloured ends. Classical Antiquity mural paintings with religious, military or daily life scenes; figures may have their names written beside them. [10]

**Islamic:** Glazed tiles. Painted or carved, stuccoed or gilded bricks, stones and wooden beams and panels. With floral or geometric motifs, arabesques or stars, and/or Arabic inscriptions. [11]

8. Bronze foundation element figurine bearing a cuneiform inscription with the name of the Sumerian king Shulgi, Uruk, end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC, 24.7 cm.  
© Vorderasiatisches Museum – SMB, Berlin / Olaf M. Teßmer

9. Clay foundation cone with cuneiform inscription, Uruk, 19<sup>th</sup> c. BC, H 5.3 cm.  
© Vorderasiatisches Museum – SMB, Berlin / Olaf M. Teßmer

10. Red, black and white painted mosaic terracotta cones mosaic (and detail), Uruk, end of the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC, 8-10 x Ø 1.5-3 cm (for a single cone).  
© Vorderasiatisches Museum – SMB, Berlin / Olaf M. Teßmer

11. Carved teak doors, 9<sup>th</sup> c. AD, 221 x 104.8 cm.  
© The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



## Figural sculpture

6<sup>th</sup> millennium – AD 632

**Plaques and inlays:** Bone, stone, ivory, shell. May be gilded or inlaid with semi-precious stones, and/or have engraved Phoenician letters on the back. Length: 8-20 cm. [12]

**Reliefs >** Carved or moulded figurative (kings and their entourage, animals, mythical creatures, deities with horned headdresses), floral or geometric motifs. Landscapes or religious, military or daily life scenes (feasts, hunts, sieges, construction).

**Terracotta:** Small plaques. Figures depicted with their heads and chests facing forward and legs sideways.

**Stone (alabaster, marble):**

**Plaques:** Pierced in the centre. Scenes depicted in horizontal rows. Min. height: 20 cm. [13]

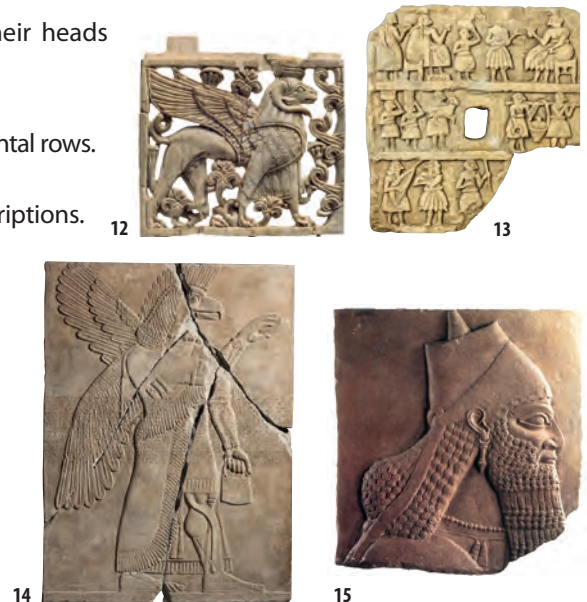
**Slabs and steles:** Fragments. May have cuneiform inscriptions. Size of the full pieces: 1-2 x 2-3 m. [14-15]

12. Ivory plaque with ram-headed sphinx in Phoenician style, Neo-Assyrian period (ca. 9<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> c. BC), 7.8 x 8 x 0.8 cm. © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

13. Stone relief plaque illustrating a banquet scene, its preparations and frolicking, Khafajah, Early Dynastic II – III A (ca. 2700 – 2600 BC), 20.4 x 20 x 4.2 cm.  
© Courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago

14. Alabaster relief of a winged and bird-headed genius with royal inscription, Northwest Palace (Nimrud), reign of Neo-Assyrian King Ashurnasirpal II (883 – 859 BC), 220 x 163 cm. © Vorderasiatisches Museum – SMB, Berlin / Olaf M. Teßmer

15. Alabaster relief of the profile of King Ashurnasirpal II, Northwest Palace (Nimrud), Neo-Assyrian Empire (911 – 609 BC), ca. 61 x 61 cm.  
© Courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago



**Sculpture in the round > Clay figurines (6000 BC – 4<sup>th</sup> c. AD):** Human- or animal-shaped. Women with arms curved under their breasts; pregnant; broad, flat hips; large and incised pubic triangles. Figures with elongated skulls, serpent faces and coffee bean-shaped eyes. May be partly coloured. Height: 8-15 cm. [16–17]  
Models and toys shaped as buildings, furniture, chariots, boats, etc. Height: 5-20 cm. [18]

**Stone (gypsum, limestone, marble) votive statues (3000 BC – AD 632):**

**Ancient Mesopotamia:** Figures with skirts or dresses with one shoulder bare; hands clasped at the chest or waist, or holding cups or branches. Inlaid or painted eyes, eyebrows and hair. Bearded and bald or long-haired men; women with headdresses or with their hair in heavy coils, braids or chignons. Height: 15-60 cm. [19]  
**Classical Antiquity:** Figures wearing trousers or long robes (caftans) and jewellery. May have inscribed bases.

16. Clay figurine with a serpent's head, Uruk, end of the 5<sup>th</sup> millennium BC, H 9.6 cm. © Vorderasiatisches Museum – SMB, Berlin / Jürgen Liepe

17. Clay figurine of a bull, Uruk, ca. 5900 – 4400 BC, L 6.2 cm.  
© Vorderasiatisches Museum – SMB, Berlin / Jürgen Liepe

18. Clay chariot model, Ashur, 2500 – 2000 BC, 13.2 x 13.2 cm.  
© Vorderasiatisches Museum – SMB, Berlin / Olaf M. Teßmer

19. Alabaster votive statue, Ashur, 2400 BC, H 46 cm.  
© Vorderasiatisches Museum – SMB, Berlin / Olaf M. Teßmer



## Vessels and containers

5<sup>th</sup> millennium BC – AD 1534

**Ceramics > Jars, plates and pilgrim flasks:** Squat, flat, rounded, elongated, animal-shaped, etc., with handles or lugs. May be plain, polychrome, and/or have figurative (humans, animals, buildings), floral and/or geometric motifs. Coloured Islamic era jugs and bottles with stamped, moulded or incised motifs. [20]

**Bowls:** With Aramaic inscriptions in black ink. May include geometric motifs. [21]

**Glazed ware:** May have Arabic inscriptions, polychrome lustre and/or blue or gold painting. Motifs are painted, stamped and/or moulded. [22–23]

**Glass:** Jars, miniature bottles, etc. May be coloured and iridescent and/or have moulded or relief motifs (animal, floral, geometric, arabesques) and Arabic inscriptions. [24–25]



20. Pottery jar, southern Iraq, early 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC, H 8 cm.  
© State Board of Antiquities and Heritage, Baghdad / Abdulamir al-Hamdani

21. Ceramic bowl with Aramaic inscription, southern Iraq, Ø 11.5 cm.  
© State Board of Antiquities and Heritage, Baghdad / Abdulamir al-Hamdani

22. Green-blue glazed jar, southern Iraq, AD 632 – 1258.  
© State Board of Antiquities and Heritage, Baghdad / Abdulamir al-Hamdani

23. Lustered plate, Samarra, Abbasid Caliphate (9<sup>th</sup> c. AD), 8.5 x Ø 26.7 cm.  
© Museum für Islamische Kunst – SMB, Berlin / Johannes Cramer

24. Miniature glass bottle, Ashur, 13<sup>th</sup> c. BC, 23.2 x Ø 7.5 cm.  
© Vorderasiatisches Museum – SMB, Berlin / Sandra Steiß

25. Glass vial, 10<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> c. AD, 10.1 x Ø 6.9 x Ø 3.5 cm.  
© Museum für Islamische Kunst – SMB, Berlin

# CULTURAL OBJECTS AT RISK

**Metal (copper, bronze, silver, gold, alloys):** Pitchers, bowls, etc., plain or with rosettes, geometric motifs and/or inlaid precious stones. Mortars with spikes or teardrop-shaped bosses. [26–27]

**Stone (agate, alabaster, calcite, chalcedony, lapis lazuli, limestone, marble, steatite):** Jars and vases. May have floral and/or geometric motifs, inlaid or carved in relief. [28]

26. Bronze vessel, Ashur, 9<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> c. BC, 41 x Ø 14.8 cm.

© Vorderasiatisches Museum – SMB, Berlin / Olaf M. Teßmer

27. Decorative brass box with silver inlay, Mosul, second quarter of the 13<sup>th</sup> c. AD, 11 x Ø 10.4 cm and 423 g. © Museum für Islamische Kunst – SMB, Berlin

28. Bituminous (black) limestone vessel with inlaid decorations, Uruk, end of the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC, H 22.5 cm. © Vorderasiatisches Museum – SMB, Berlin / Olaf M. Teßmer



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## Accessories and instruments

5<sup>th</sup> millennium BC – 19<sup>th</sup> century AD

**Jewellery:** Metal (copper, bronze, silver, gold), shell, gemstones (carnelian, lapis lazuli, rock crystal, turquoise), glass, ivory, hardwood, ceramics, faience. Necklaces, earrings, threaded beads, etc.; hammered, gilded, cast, carved or granulated. Animal and floral motifs. May be inlaid. [29–30–31–32]

**Tools and weapons:** Ivory, stone and metal (copper, bronze, iron, steel) needles, axes, knives, arrows, armour, etc. Plain or with carved images (humans, animals, hybrids and/or deities). Armour and weapons of the Islamic period can be decorated with arabesques and inscriptions. [33]



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29. Gold earring with jasper and carnelian beads, Ashur, 14<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> c. BC, L 3.5 cm.

© Vorderasiatisches Museum – SMB, Berlin / Olaf M. Teßmer

30. Beaded necklace, Uruk, 8<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC, Ø 10 cm.

© Vorderasiatisches Museum – SMB, Berlin / Olaf M. Teßmer

31. Stone and shell necklace, southern Iraq, Parthian era (125 BC – AD 240).

© State Board of Antiquities and Heritage, Baghdad / Abdulamir al-Hamdani

32. Gold earring with pearls, garnets and glass, 8<sup>th</sup> c. AD, 9 x 2.5 cm and 8.2-8.4 g.

© Museum für Islamische Kunst – SMB, Berlin

33. Bronze axe, Ashur, last quarter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC, L 12.8 cm.

© Vorderasiatisches Museum – SMB, Berlin / Fotoarchiv

## Coins

400 BC – AD 1258

**Pre-Islamic:** Achaemenid Empire gold darics and silver sigloi, Seleucid copper coins, Parthian and Sasanian era silver drachms. Plain or with astrological signs and/or images of royals, archers, deities and/or fire altars, often off-centre. May have inscriptions. Mint locations are abbreviated to 2-3 letters. [34]

**Islamic:** Mostly Abbasid Caliphate gold dinars. With 2-3 lines in Arabic surrounded by inscriptions, or with an image on one side and writing on the other. Mint locations written in Arabic. Average size: Ø 19 mm. [35]

34. Sasanian silver drachm, southern Iraq, reign of Khusrau II (AD 622), Ø 32 mm and 4.13 g. © Trustees of the British Museum, London

35. Abbasid gold dinar, reign of al-Mansur (AD 760), 4.26 g.

© Trustees of the British Museum, London



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# ICOM AND THE PROTECTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

The International Council of Museums (ICOM), created in 1946 to represent museums and museum professionals worldwide, is committed to the promotion and protection of natural and cultural heritage, present and future, tangible and intangible. With a unique network of over 40,000 members in 138 countries and territories (2018), ICOM is active in a wide range of museum-and heritage-related disciplines.

ICOM maintains formal relations with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and has a consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) as an expert in the fight against illicit traffic in cultural goods. ICOM also works in collaboration with organisations such as INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization (WCO) to carry out some of its international public service missions.

The protection of heritage in the event of natural disaster or armed conflict is also at the core of ICOM's work, thanks to its Disaster Risk Management Committee (DRMC) and through its strong involvement in the international Blue Shield. ICOM has the ability to mobilise expert networks in the field of cultural heritage from all over the world thanks to its numerous programmes.

In 2013, ICOM created the first International Observatory on Illicit Traffic in Cultural Goods in order to reinforce its action in fighting illicit traffic.

The Red Lists have been designed as practical tools to curb the illegal trade in cultural objects. ICOM is grateful for the unwavering commitment of the experts and institutions who generously contribute to the success of the Red Lists.

The Red Lists are available at the following address: <http://redlist.icom.museum>

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*U.S. Department of State  
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