Emergency Safeguarding of the Cultural Heritage of Iraq

UNESCO is coordinating efforts to combat illicit trafficking of cultural property, in collaboration with INTERPOL, ICOM, the World Customs Organization and law enforcement agencies.

Activities undertaken since the onset of the conflict in 2014

- Emergency Expert Meeting for the Safeguarding of Iraq's Cultural Heritage
- Establishment of the Emergency Response Action Plan for the Safeguarding of Iraq's Cultural Heritage
- UNESCO Director-General visited Baghdad and Erbil
- Japan supports Action Plan
- Preventive Conservation of Iraq’s Museum Collections and Cultural Heritage Sites at Imminent Risk
- UNESCO Director-General launched the #Unite4Heritage campaign
- Project "Preventive Conservation of Iraq's Museum Collections and Cultural Heritage Sites at Imminent Risk", officially announced.

Objectives of the Emergency Response Action Plan

1. Ensuring that international actors in the field are engaged in the process of awareness and reporting on the state of safeguarding of Cultural Heritage and in raising awareness of its importance.
2. Ensuring that appropriate coordination and measures are in place to monitor the state of protection of cultural heritage and to implement risk-mitigation measures.
3. Providing technical assistance and training in the establishment of standards and risk-mitigation mechanisms for cultural heritage protection and its capacity-building.
4. Enhancing knowledge, training and information about the state of conservation of sites by conducting damage assessment to cultural heritage for the longer-term recovery planning process.

Activities since 2003

Since 2003, UNESCO has implemented a number of projects through the support of various donors including the European Union, Iraq, the Kurdistan Regional Government, Japan, Czech Republic, Norway, and Poland.

- Awareness-raising: Campaigns of assessment aimed at the present condition of the archaeological sites of in Iraq.
- Illicit traffic: 3 TV spots and 1 infographic film produced and broadcast to raise awareness on the dangers of illicit trafficking of cultural property and to sensitize Iraqi youth on the importance of protecting their cultural heritage.
- Damage assessment: UNESCO has worked with a number of museums and repositories of cultural objects on several areas including object conservation, creation of databases, training staff on object ID and laboratory restoration.
- Intangible cultural heritage: A capacity-building workshop on the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Heritage was held in addition to carrying out a needs assessment report on the situation in Iraq.
- Conservation and Promotion of Cultural Heritage: UNESCO has been implementing cultural heritage conservation and management at several significant sites in Iraq. Conservation work in some sites was carried out under the lead of Angel Berte, the chief conservator at Deir el-Bahri Museum.
- Intangible Cultural Heritage: UNESCO has been coordinating cultural heritage conservation and management at several significant sites in Iraq. Conservation work in some sites was carried out under the lead of Angel Berte, the chief conservator at Deir el-Bahri Museum.

Conservation and Promotion of Cultural Heritage

- UNESCO has been coordinating cultural heritage conservation and management at several significant sites in Iraq. Conservation work in some sites was carried out under the lead of Angel Berte, the chief conservator at Deir el-Bahri Museum.

Key planned actions

1. Updating of inventories
2. Monitoring by satellite imagery
3. Risk preparedness
4. Emergency contingency planning
5. Awareness raising

Since 2003, UNESCO has implemented a number of projects through the support of various donors including the European Union, Iraq, the Kurdistan Regional Government, Japan, Czech Republic, Norway, and Poland.