



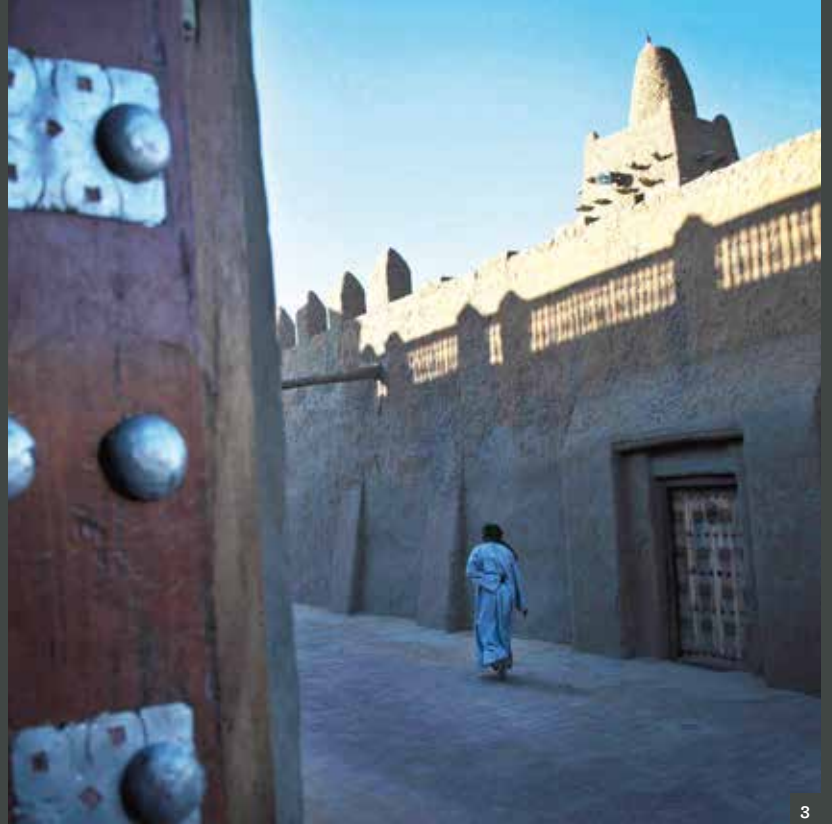
United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



UNESCO'S RESPONSE TO PROTECT CULTURE IN CRISES



UNITE4HERITAGE



“ Culture implies more than just monuments and stones – culture defines who we are. It carries universal values and the many faces of our shared humanity.

It is the wellspring of collective imagination, memory and belonging. It is a source of resilience, well-being and social cohesion. It is a force for recovery, creativity and innovation.

When peoples’ cultures are threatened, when their heritage is deliberately attacked, when their cultural rights are violated, we must respond with more culture, more knowledge, more unity. When culture is at the frontline of crisis, it must also be on the frontline of recovery and peace-building.

Development can not be sustainable without culture and there can be no lasting peace without respect for cultural diversity and artistic freedom.

Protecting culture and heritage means protecting people. This is what UNESCO stands for.”

Irina Bokova,
Director-General of UNESCO



- (1) View of the World Heritage site of the Citadel Laferrière, Haiti. © Elke Selter
- (2) View of the World Heritage site of the Old City of Sana'a, Yemen.
© UNESCO/Maria Gropa
- (3) Timbuktu, December 05, 2013 – A resident walks by Djingarey Berre Mosque, one of three UNESCO World Heritage mosques of Timbuktu, North of Mali.
© MINUSMA/Marco Dormino
- (4) Children in Ramallah, Palestine, at an event held in the framework of the #Unite4Heritage Campaign. © UNESCO
- (5) UNESCO's Director-General, Ms Irina Bokova, with students at the launch event of the #Unite4Heritage campaign at Baghdad University, Iraq, on 28 March 2015.
© UNESCO
- (6) World Heritage site of Leptis Magna, Libya. © UNESCO
- (7) Participants at a #Unite4Heritage campaign event in Gaza.
© UNESCO/Motaz Alaaraj
- (8) © UNESCO



CURRENT CHALLENGES

Cultural heritage and pluralism have increasingly become the **direct targets of systematic and deliberate attacks** in numerous conflicts around the world. More and more, UNESCO and its partners are called upon to respond. Culture is particularly vulnerable to **collateral damage, looting** and **intentional destruction**, which is often paired with the **persecution of individuals based on their cultural, ethnic or religious affiliation** and the denial of other communities' identities resulting in 'cultural cleansing'.

The evolving nature of contemporary conflicts, from inter to intra-state, poses a significant challenge to the current world order built on international treaties and decision-making. Armed non-state actors are increasingly challenging domestic governance and often do not consider themselves bound by decisions taken at the international level. These conflicts increasingly affect culture and challenge the way in which organizations like UNESCO, whose programmes are built around international conventions signed by States, can respond.

Moreover, conflicts no longer have clear endings, they create **complex humanitarian emergencies** of a protracted nature. Even when peace agreements are signed, power struggles continue that challenge fragile agreements leaving large parts of the population displaced and dependent on humanitarian aid. The absence of clearly distinguishable post-conflict phases and the high number of protracted conflicts that can escalate at any given time require a **prolonged engagement** on the part of the international community with regards to both the delivery of basic humanitarian assistance and protection responsibilities, including the safeguarding of cultural rights.

In addition, cultural heritage resources, including intangible ones, are increasingly affected by natural disasters around the world, the result of a variety of underlying factors such as natural and **human-made hazards and climate change**.





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THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURE IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

Culture and heritage, as expressions of peoples' identity, repositories of memory and traditional knowledge, are essential components of a community's identity and social capital. Promoting respect for cultural diversity is fundamental to **preventing violent extremism**, generating **positive dialogue and inclusion**, and fostering lasting **peace**.

The significance of culture in the lives of communities and individuals makes its continuity a powerful tool for building **resilience**, serving as a basis for sustainable **recovery**. Likewise, the rehabilitation of heritage can contribute towards healing the scars of war and natural disasters by allowing communities to recover a sense of **hope, dignity** and **empowerment**. As a visible expression of common ground between communities, culture can be a powerful tool for **reconciliation** and a building block for **social cohesion**.

Artists and cultural institutions play an essential role in ensuring freedom of expression, promoting cultural diversity and fostering inclusive dialogue. Such cultural expressions also offer appropriate ways to deal with psycho-social distress and so reconcile communities.

By protecting cultural heritage and promoting cultural pluralism in emergency situations, UNESCO contributes towards **protecting human rights, preventing conflicts and building peace, upholding international humanitarian law and enhancing resilience among communities**.



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(1) Pieces from a destroyed panel at the Mizran Mosque in Tripoli, Libya. © UNESCO

(2) The colonnade at the World Heritage site of Palmyra in April 2016. © UNESCO

(3) Burned manuscripts in Timbuktu, Mali. © UNESCO/Lazare Eloundou

(4) In Timbuktu, Mali, UNESCO collaborated with local masonry associations to complete the reconstruction of 14 of the 16 mausoleums inscribed on the World Heritage List and deliberately destroyed by violent extremist groups in 2012. © UNESCO/Emmanuelle Hernandez

(5) Damaged temple in Swayambunath, Kathmandu, Nepal after the 25 April 2015 earthquake. © Christian Manhart

UNESCO IN ACTION

UNESCO has a long record of intervention to protect or rehabilitate cultural heritage affected by conflicts or natural disasters, as it leads international efforts and campaigns around the world. The unprecedented attacks against culture and heritage, notably in the Middle East, together with the increased occurrence of natural disasters have called for new and more effective approaches to meet these challenges.

A New Strategy

At its 38th General Conference in November 2015, UNESCO adopted a *Strategy for the reinforcement of the organization's actions for the protection of culture and the promotion of cultural pluralism in the event of armed conflict*. It builds on the six culture conventions administered by UNESCO by strengthening their synergy and operational capacity to achieve the dual objectives:

- to strengthen Member States' ability to prevent, mitigate and recover the loss of cultural heritage and diversity as a result of conflict; and
- to incorporate the protection of culture into humanitarian action, security strategies and peace-building processes.

from different professional fields to strengthen efforts in the protection of cultural heritage.

This involves strengthening our cooperation with traditional partners and establishing new forms of cooperation with actors beyond the field of culture such as the humanitarian and security sectors.

Building on its 70 years of experience, through its *Strategy* and thanks to new partnerships, UNESCO intends to concretely reinforce its primary mission, that is “building the defenses of peace in the minds of men” through culture, and thus demonstrate the extraordinary potential of culture to contribute to peace and security.

How UNESCO responds to crisis

UNESCO's activities for protecting cultural heritage and promoting cultural pluralism in crisis situations revolve around three main types of activities:

- Advocacy and Awareness-raising
- Documentation and Monitoring
- Capacity-building and Technical Assistance

Working together as a Global Coalition

The *Strategy* also provides a focus for the mobilization of the **Global Coalition 'Unite for Heritage'**. Launched in June 2015 by the Director-General of UNESCO, Ms Irina Bokova, it aims to bring together a wide range of actors





Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (1954)



Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970)



Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972)



Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (2001)



Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)



Convention on the Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005)

(1) In response to the armed conflict in Northern Mali, UNESCO, in collaboration with the National Directorate of Cultural Heritage in Mali and the International Centre for Earthen Architecture (CRATERre), produced a “Heritage Passport” (“Passeport pour le patrimoine”). It provides detailed information on the location and the importance of cultural sites and was developed to raise awareness among the armed forces, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the international community and local communities about the importance of safeguarding these heritage sites. © UNESCO

(2) Joint recovery operation of UNESCO, MINUSTAH, ICCROM and the Smithsonian Institute at the collapsed museum “Centre d’Art” in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, in 2010. © Elke Selter

(3) UNESCO emergency activities implemented in Bamiyan, Afghanistan, for the recovery and rehabilitation of the cliff and niches after the destruction of the two Buddha statues in 2001. © Claudio Margottini

UNESCO protects the right to culture and ensures the enjoyment of cultural rights.

CULTURE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, respect for **cultural rights**, including the safeguarding of culture, must be integrated within the humanitarian response to crisis situations. Beyond the physical destruction of cultural heritage there is also the tremendous human impact of human rights violations, including the right to culture, the right to enjoy, develop, and have access to cultural life and identity, the right to education, the right to assemble and freedom of expression.

The Director-General of UNESCO used the term **‘cultural cleansing’** to describe this combination of deliberate destruction of cultural heritage with the persecution of individuals on cultural and religious grounds.

Over 60 million people have been forcibly **displaced** by conflict with many suffering from the direct targeting of their cultural references and often from diminished **access to culture** that deny them the enjoyment of their cultural rights. Refugees and displaced people tend to draw from their intangible cultural heritage as a resource for social and psychological resilience in the face of intense difficulties. At the same time their intangible cultural heritage is threatened, not least due to the disruption of communities and families. Their ability to access and enjoy culture and cultural rights must be guaranteed in these circumstances as it helps them cope with the psychological distress of forced displacement, and ensures their well-being in adapting and settling into the new context of a host country. Indeed, the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage requires States Parties to “take the necessary measures to ensure the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage present in its territory”.

Artists in particular can play an important role in ensuring the enjoyment of cultural life by all, as they are among the most vibrant, engaged and outspoken members of society. Supporting their right to freedom of expression enhances their

role as catalysts of social change, helping them to fight exclusion and inequality, imagining a new future that restores hope. Therefore, advocating for the rights of artists must form a key part of any strategy confronting cultural cleansing and the challenges of forced displacement.

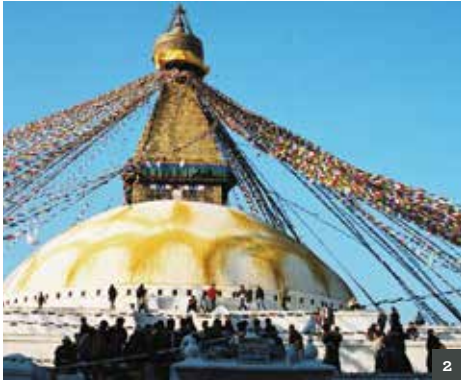
(1) Theater activity in Port-Au-Prince, Haiti after the 12 January 2010 earthquake.

© Elke Selter

(4) People gather for the Indra Jatra Festival at Hanuman Dhoka square in Kathmandu, Nepal, part of the of the World Heritage site of the Kathmandu Valley. © UNESCO

(5) Hanuman Dhoka square, part of the of the World Heritage site of the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal, after the 25 April 2015 earthquake. © UNESCO





2 The monuments of the World Heritage site of the Kathmandu Valley in Nepal play a central role in the daily lives of thousands of people, representing portals where the heavens touch the earth and where it is possible for ordinary people to reach out and commune with their goddesses and gods. As living religious heritage of intangible value, the damaged sites of Nepal will be the subject of a major programme of protection and conservation.

© UNESCO



3 Designated UNESCO Creative City in 2014, the Haitian city of Jacmel is known for its rich heritage, lively carnival and singular know-how in the field of arts and folk art. In the wake of the earthquake on 12 January 2010, Jacmel has invested in its renewal by promoting its culture, traditions, art and crafts. The Carnival of Jacmel, known for its creativity and exceptional originality, was the starting point for the creative development of the city – its painting, sculpture and giant papier-mâché masks anchored in local traditions are a source of meaning and belonging – and also provides concrete job opportunities and improves livelihoods for the entire community. Every year the carnival brings together craft artists in collaboration with many professional crafts and folk art associations. In an effort to facilitate the population's access to culture following the earthquake, UNESCO also supported theatre activities in camps for internally displaced throughout Haiti that made reference to local traditions.

© UNESCO/Anna Giolitto



Culture can drive inclusiveness and spark dialogue between individuals and communities, allowing for different perspectives and helping to identify common ground.

(1) People dancing at a cultural diversity festival in Wau, Western Bahr El-Ghazal state, South Sudan, in 2012. © Elke Selter

(2) At the Khwaja Sabz Push Shrine in Bamiyan, Afghanistan, after its restoration with the support of Switzerland. © UNESCO/Bert Praxenthaler

(3) Digitization of the manuscripts of Timbuktu, Mali, by the NGO SAVAMA-DCI, in the framework of the rehabilitation of the city's cultural heritage undertaken in partnership with UNESCO. © MINUSMA/Marco Dormino

(4) Creppissage of the Mosque of Djenne, Mali. © MINUSMA/Sophie Ravier

CULTURE FOR CONFLICT PREVENTION AND PEACE-BUILDING

Culture has a unique capacity to bring together people in **inclusive dialogue**. For the past 10 years, UNESCO has promoted programmes and initiatives that make use of cultural expressions, arts and heritage to open up dialogue and to connect communities and peoples. Cultural heritage, identity and cultural life provide legitimacy for collective and participatory local governance, and lie at the heart of sustainable peace and inclusive societies. Distinctive cultures, as well as traditional institutions and authorities, should therefore be seen as **a resource for conflict prevention or peace-building processes, knowledge, legitimacy, participation and enhanced effectiveness**.

In **complex emergency situations** culture can be a vehicle to foster **tolerance, mutual understanding** and **reconciliation, mitigating social tensions** and preventing renewed escalation into violent conflict. Film, dance and theatre, for example, have been used to build mutual understanding among diverse refugee communities.

Respect of cultural diversity and dialogue are prerequisites for **building respect and tolerance**. They are a positive force in promoting tolerance and they counter restrictive visions of cultural identity that can threaten stability. A more inclusive heritage dialogue that goes beyond stereotypes and includes marginalized communities in the overall discussion is crucial in peace-building processes.





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5 Following the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and with the dedication of local authorities to promote their cultural heritage as a tool of intercultural dialogue, UNESCO led international efforts to reconstruct the Old Bridge in Mostar in 2004. Today, the World Heritage site of the Old Bridge Area of the Old City of Mostar stands as a symbol of reconciliation, international cooperation and the coexistence of diverse cultural, ethnic and religious communities.

© Elke Selter



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6 In Timbuktu, Mali, UNESCO collaborated with local masonry associations to complete the reconstruction of 14 of the 16 mausoleums inscribed on the World Heritage List which were deliberately destroyed by violent extremist groups in 2012. A consecration ceremony was held in February 2016 to celebrate the revival of the city's invaluable heritage. The rehabilitation of Timbuktu's destroyed heritage served to ensure the continuity of the city's ancient cultural traditions as well as to commemorate and overcome, as a community, the traumatic experience of its loss.

©UNESCO/Clarisse Njikam

As culture is abused as a target and a source of financing of conflict, the protection of cultural heritage has important implications in terms of international security.

CULTURE, INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW AND SECURITY

In situations of armed conflict, cultural property enjoys protection under customary **international humanitarian law** (IHL). According to Art. 8 (2)(e)(iv) of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, it is a war crime to “intentionally [direct] attacks against buildings dedicated to religion, education, art, science or charitable purposes, historic monuments [...] provided they are not military objectives”. The 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two protocols (1954 and 1999) are also a key part of IHL.

Following the international community’s recognition of the fact that illicit trafficking in cultural property may contribute to **financing terrorism** in Iraq and Syria, UNESCO mobilized its partners to take action in this regard by successfully advocating for a worldwide moratorium on trade in Iraqi and Syrian cultural property, as set forth in UN Security Council Resolution 2199 adopted on 12 February 2015 under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. This landmark resolution acknowledges the link between illicit trafficking of cultural property and terrorism as a threat to international security.



1 Under the coordination of the Italian Ministry of Culture and Tourism, a national ‘Task Force’ of cultural heritage experts has been established. At the request of UNESCO, its members, including Carabinieri specialized in the fight against illicit trafficking, are ready to deploy and assist in safeguarding cultural heritage at risk, both for preventive purposes as well as in emergency situations resulting from armed conflict and natural disasters. © ANSA



2 The looting and illicit trafficking of cultural objects deprive people of their cultural heritage and finances terrorism and criminal networks. As a member of the UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) Working Group on Countering the Financing of Terrorism, and in close coordination with partners such as INTERPOL, the World Customs Organization and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, UNESCO works to curb illicit trafficking by training law enforcement and customs officers, identifying illegal trade patterns and seizing looted objects with a view to their restitution. © UNESCO



3 In cooperation with UNITAR-UNOSAT and other partners, UNESCO monitors damage to cultural heritage via satellite imagery, allowing remote access to otherwise inaccessible areas. This helps to clarify the situation on the ground, to deploy cultural first aid wherever it is most needed and to plan for future recovery, all of which are based on a comprehensive record of historic features and the involvement of local communities and their understanding of the consequences of destruction. These satellite images show the archaeological site of Nimrud, inscribed on Iraq’s Tentative list of World Heritage, on 7 March 2015, before its destruction, and on 18 April 2015, after its destruction.

© CNES (2015), Distribution AIRBUS DS - Source: GeoStore/Airbus Defence and Space Satellite Imagery Analysis by UNITAR-UNOSAT



1 Since 2003, UNESCO has been working to safeguard several components of the World Heritage site of the Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley in Afghanistan. The site is testimony to the destruction of the two standing Buddha statues by the Taliban, which shocked the world in March 2001. UNESCO's planned construction of the Bamiyan Cultural Centre will promote cross-cultural understanding and cultural diversity. It will serve as a public space for civil society and the general public in Bamiyan to enjoy handicraft training and shops, thereby creating jobs and generating income. With the restoration of historic sites in Bamiyan the communities are once again able to enjoy their cultural rights, develop them further and build on the Cultural Centre's support of artistic and cultural processes, with the institution serving as a platform to connect the public with Afghan cultural traditions and practices. As a city recovering from the disastrous effects of conflict, Bamiyan thrives on its cultural resources: the city is a member of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network and organizes annual cultural festivals such as Silk Road, Buzkahshi and Food Festival. It also attracts the highest number of national tourists in Afghanistan. Here, the Islamic-era citadel of Shahr-e-Gholghola is being restored with the support of Italy. © UNESCO/ Mujtabah Mirzai



2 The UNESCO Jakarta Office manages the project 'Strengthening Resilience of Coastal and Small Island Communities towards Hydro-meteorological Hazards and Climate Change Impacts (StResCom)' that focuses on local and indigenous knowledge related to hydro-meteorological hazards and climate change in Indonesia, the Philippines and Timor-Leste. One of the objectives of this project is to identify and document local and indigenous knowledge in coastal and small island communities as they relate to hydro-meteorological disasters and climate change adaptation, as well as to develop educational and awareness-raising materials and tools for these communities based on the integration of science with local and indigenous knowledge. This traditional house in Raimea Village, Covalima, Timor-Leste, is made of *ai tatan* to clamp the roof from storms and strong winds, and *lenik* to prevent strong winds from entering the house. © UNESCO/UNTL

CULTURE FOR RESILIENCE AND RECOVERY

To prevent natural disasters, **traditional knowledge** can be critical in the early detection of environmental risks such as droughts, earthquakes or tsunamis. Combined with other scientific knowledge, traditional knowledge enhances the **resilience** of communities to environmental threats, including climate change.

Communities give priority to dealing with the devastation of their heritage as a result of natural disaster. Whether as part of local or large scale public efforts, culture tends to play a central role in overcoming **trauma** and in **rebuilding** communities. This can include the creation of memorials or commemorations but also includes the physical reconstruction of the heritage that has been lost.

The ultimate objective of protecting cultural heritage is to safeguard the living culture of humanity, preserve human rights and dignity, and the rights of past and future generations. It is thus essential to help rebuild communities following disasters, and why the intentional destruction and violation of cultural rights are considered aggravating factors in armed conflict, representing major obstacles to dialogue, future peace and reconciliation.

The safeguarding of culture strengthens resilience and fosters social cohesion for a more sustainable recovery.



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(1) A woman performs a traditional dance on the occasion of UNESCO's first mission to Gao, Mali, on 11 February 2014 to evaluate damage to the city's cultural heritage.
© UN Photo/Thierry Joffroy

(2-4) #Unite4Heritage campaign visuals.
© UNESCO

(5) #Unite4Heritage campaign visual.
© Montse Marsé, Malcolm Browne, Jmencisom, GollyGForce (CC BY-SA 2.0)

(6) #Unite4Heritage campaign visual.
© Terry Feuerborn, Michael Tapp, Steven Zucker, Pierre-Olivier Bourgeois (CC BY-SA 2.0)

#UNITE4HERITAGE

#Unite4Heritage, launched in Baghdad in March 2015 by the Director-General of UNESCO, Ms Irina Bokova, is a global social media campaign with a focus on the Arab Region that seeks to engage youth in particular. It was developed in response to the unprecedented attacks against cultural heritage and cultural diversity affecting the region. It seeks to provide an alternative narrative to violent extremism and sectarian propaganda. It builds on the shared heritage of humanity to foster global citizenship and tolerance while addressing the lack of belonging, which is one of the root causes of radicalization. It has since become a major platform for online discourse related to celebrating and safeguarding cultural heritage and cultural diversity.

In addition to building its online community, #Unite4Heritage is implementing on-the-ground activities and events involving young people from local communities through UNESCO Field Offices across the Arab Region.

Join the Global Coalition “Unite for Heritage”

If your organization is interested in engaging directly with UNESCO to protect culture or if you wish to contribute financially to our work in crisis situations, we invite you to join the Global Coalition ‘Unite for Heritage’!

The Global Coalition ‘Unite for Heritage’ aims to strengthen UNESCO action in the protection of culture in crisis situations by engaging with a wide array of partners, not only from the culture and heritage sector but also from security and humanitarian organizations, governments, the private sector, civil society and the media. In this way, UNESCO can even more effectively protect cultural assets in emergency situations, and thus ensure that the cultural rights of refugees or displaced persons are respected while raising awareness among the youth of the value of culture and open, inclusive and pluralistic societies.

For more information, please contact us at epr@unesco.org

UNESCO Heritage Emergency Fund

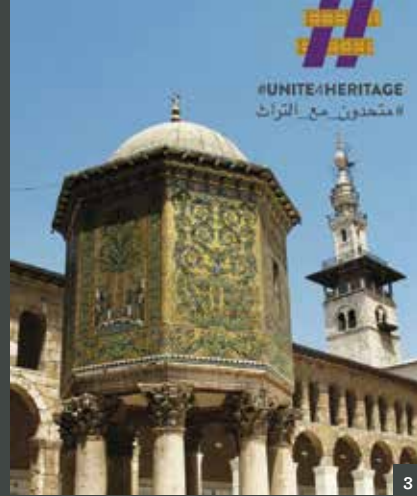
The Heritage Emergency Fund is a multi-donor fund for the protection of heritage in emergency situations. It was created by UNESCO to finance activities and projects that enable the Organization to assist its Member States in protecting natural and cultural heritage from disasters and conflicts by more effectively preparing for and responding to emergencies.

Please donate online at www.unesco.org/donate/hef

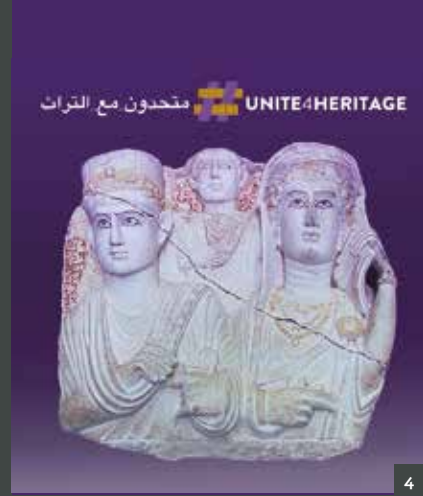




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Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE UNIT

7, place de Fontenoy
F-75352 Paris 07 SP
Tel.: +33 (0)1 45 68 45 18
epr@unesco.org

WWW.UNESCO.ORG