

## *Press release*

**Paris, 23 September 2013**

### **ICOM officially announces the publication of the *Emergency Red List of Syrian Cultural Objects at Risk***

Following the events that have shaken Syria for the past two years, and ever mindful of the rising threat that armed conflicts pose to the safeguarding of movable cultural heritage, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) has decided to publish a new Emergency Red List: *The Emergency Red List of Syrian Cultural Objects at Risk*.

As reports of widespread damage and looting at cultural heritage sites in Syria became available, ICOM decided to publish the *Emergency Red List of Syrian Cultural Objects at Risk* with the aim to help art and heritage professionals and law enforcement officials identify Syrian objects that are protected by national and international legislations.

The ICOM Red Lists aim to help customs and police officials, as well as other professionals concerned by the smuggling and illicit trading in cultural objects, fight against the illicit traffic of cultural goods. In order to facilitate identification, they illustrate the categories or types of cultural items that are most likely to be illegally bought and sold.

The Red List will be officially presented at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York on Wednesday 25 September 2013 at 3 p.m.

ICOM is grateful to the leadership of The Metropolitan Museum of Art for making it possible to hold this important Red List launch at the museum, and to the U.S. Department of State for sponsoring this event.

The launch will take place in the presence of the Director General of UNESCO, Ms. Irina Bokova; the Director and CEO of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Dr. Thomas P. Campbell; and of U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees, and Migration, Ms. Anne Richard. The President of ICOM International, Prof. Dr. Hans-Martin Hinz, will officially represent the organisation on this occasion, and will introduce the Syrian Emergency Red List to the attendees.

In its aim to best cover the diversity of Syrian cultural heritage, the Red List presents categories of objects born from the different cultures that have called Syria home over the past millennia. The types of objects

*“The ICOM Red Lists help identify the types of objects that are most susceptible to illicit trafficking and therefore subject to smuggling and illicit trade”*

*“Any cultural object that could have originated in Syria should be subjected to detailed scrutiny and precautionary measures”*

*“Fighting the illicit trafficking of cultural goods is preserving the invaluable witnesses of a country, and humankind’s, evolution, history and artistic expression”*

presented are tablets, statues, containers, architectural elements and jewellery. Due to the great diversity of objects, styles and periods, the *Emergency Red List of Syrian Cultural Objects at Risk* is far from exhaustive. Any cultural object that could have originated in Syria should be subjected to detailed scrutiny and precautionary measures.

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.

ICOM’s commitment to the protection of heritage is exemplified through two of its Technical Committees: The Disaster Relief Task Force for museums (DRTF), who monitors and reports on possible risks and existing damage to heritage in emergency situations, and the Ethics Committee (ETHCOM), who advises ICOM in all matters related to museum professional ethics.

Through the work of its Committees, constant contact with the international community and diverse programmes, ICOM reiterates and upholds its firm commitment to the protection of cultural heritage in emergency situations.

*This Emergency Red List was developed with the generous support of:*



*U.S. Department of State  
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and Cultural Affairs*

**Press Contact**

For all matters or interviews regarding ICOM, its fight against illicit traffic in cultural goods and *Red Lists of Cultural Objects at Risk*, please contact the ICOM Press Service: [icom.presse@icom.museum](mailto:icom.presse@icom.museum) / Tel: +33 (0)1 47 34 05 00

