



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

09/06/2017

Ref.: CL/4210

Subject: **United Nations Security Council Resolution 2347**

Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to draw your attention to the recent Resolution 2347 on peacekeeping and international security, which was unanimously adopted by United Nations' Security Council on 24 March last.

This Resolution is the first to focus exclusively on the protection of cultural heritage and its necessity for peace and security. It reinforces Resolution 2199, which was adopted in February 2015 partly to fight against international terrorism financing, and which prohibits the illicit trafficking of cultural goods from Iraq and Syria. This new Resolution now adds the thorough awareness of culture's role as a source of stability and inclusion, and as a driver of reconciliation and resilience. It is the result of UNESCO's efforts within the United Nations in recent years to include and stress the importance of heritage in our international efforts for peacebuilding and maintaining security. The unanimous support towards this text reflects this newly shared acknowledgement at the highest level. Please find the mentioned text attached to this letter.

Important progress has been carried out to block illicit trafficking of antiquities from financing terrorism ever since the adoption of the Security Council's Resolution 2199 (2015) to prohibit the illicit trafficking of cultural goods from Iraq and Syria. UNESCO has already taken the initiative to create an international coordination platform that assembles Heads of agencies such as UNODC, INTERPOL, WCO, UNIDROIT and ICOM, to coordinate our actions to fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural goods. About fifty States have reinforced their legislations and now share information and data to dismantle sectors of illicit trafficking and ease restitutions. This platform creates a precious tool to control our common follow-ups and to harmonize the reports expected by Resolution 2347 in the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural goods, which is reinforced by this new Resolution.

The Security Council especially revives the decision it made in paragraph 7 of Resolution 1483 (2003). Member States are asked to help prohibit Iraqi and Syrian goods and all other objects with archeological, historical, cultural, scientific or religious value that have been illicitly robbed in Iraq since 6 August 1990, or in Syria since 15 March 2011, from being sold. For example, States may freeze all transnational trading of these objects, therefore enabling their restitution to the Iraqi and Syrian people. In that sense, we point out that it is UNESCO's, INTERPOL's and other international organizations' responsibility to facilitate paragraph 7's implementation.

To Ministers responsible for relations with UNESCO

On top of its efforts to fight against illicit trafficking, the new Resolution 2347 considerably enlarges the scope of actions requested for the protection of cultural heritage to respond to and prevent violent extremism.

The Security Council thus underlines that some attacks against religious, educational, artistic, scientific, historical or charity sites and monuments may, in some circumstances and according to international law, constitute war crimes, and that their authors must be brought to justice. In that sense, UNESCO has cooperated for several years with the International Criminal Court to sanction those responsible of war crimes against Mali's (Timbuktu) cultural heritage.

The Security Council also stresses the possibility to include the protection of cultural heritage in the United Nations' peacekeeping missions when it expressively requests it. This decision encourages UNESCO's long-term actions to train special authorities to peacekeeping, especially in Mali (MINUSMA).

The Security Council's fifteen members however remind Member States they are first responsible of the protection of their cultural heritage, according to the United Nation's Charter and in respect of the principle of sovereignty. The Security Council welcomes UNESCO's efforts to protect endangered heritage and to promote cultural pluralism. It especially favours the Strategy it adopted in 2015 to reinforce its actions for culture's protection and the promotion of cultural pluralism in armed conflicts, and encourages Member States to support it. The Security Council acknowledges UNESCO's Emergency Fund for Heritage, created to protect endangered cultural heritage during armed conflicts, and encourages Member States to strengthen and fund these preventions and urgency operations.

The Security Council reaches out to Member States that have not yet ratified UNESCO's Conventions to do so, especially the 1954 Convention and its two Protocols. It further underlines the importance of the 1970 Conventions against illicit trafficking of cultural goods.

As regards to the complete report of these different aspects of heritage as a source of peace and stability, which the Secretary General of the United Nations must share with the Security Council regarding the application of Resolution 2347, I will request that you please send me any information you may have on the national actions taken to implement this Resolution, before 30 August 2017.

This information might concern the relevant paragraphs of Resolution 2347:

- 8: all actions taken that concern the prohibition of trade and the restitutions of Syrian and Iraqi goods, and the freezing of financial assets.
- 9 and 10: the adoption of legislative and operational measures to fight against trafficking and qualify it as a serious offense, and the suggestion of a list of people and entities implicated in trafficking.
- 11 and 12: the elaboration of cooperation between judiciary and police forces, and in terms of investigations, seizures, returns and restitutions.
- 15: the payment of contributions to UNESCO's Emergency Fund for Heritage, and the recovery of cultural goods according to UNESCO's Conventions.

- 16: the adoption of preventive measures to protect cultural goods of particular national importance during armed conflicts.
- 17: the adoption of measures to prevent and fight the illicit trafficking of exported and imported cultural goods through:
  - o The creation of digitized and accessible inventories.
  - o The creation of databases for stolen goods, and for national legislation's usage and contribution to UNESCO's bases.
  - o The establishment of standards for museums and the art market in provenance certifications and due diligence, the sharing of lists of cultural sites under terrorist control, the development of education and awareness, the creation of educational programmes on the protection of cultural heritage and raising public awareness of illicit trafficking.
- 18: The providing of assistance to Member States in the field of mine-clearing of sites and cultural objects affected by conflicts.

UNESCO wishes to hold itself fully accountable for the coordination and implementation of all Resolution 2347's decisions for the protection and promotion of cultural heritage as a source of peace and stability. We will work on this goal in strong cooperation with UNODC, INTERPOL and all our relevant partners, and in full accordance with the United Nations' international Conventions and Resolutions.

UNESCO is more than ever committed to protect cultural heritage during armed conflicts. I strongly appreciate the attention brought by your country, as well as the initiatives it has taken to implement the Security Council's Resolutions in order to consolidate peace and security.

Please accept, Sir/Madam, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Irina Bokova  
Director General

cc: Permanent Delegations to UNESCO  
National Commissions for UNESCO





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**Resolution 2347 (2017)**

**Adopted by the Security Council at its 7907th meeting, on  
24 March 2017**

*The Security Council,*

*Recalling* its resolutions [1267 \(1999\)](#), [1373 \(2001\)](#), [1483 \(2003\)](#), [1546 \(2004\)](#), [2056 \(2012\)](#), [2071 \(2012\)](#), [2085 \(2012\)](#), [2100 \(2013\)](#), [2139 \(2014\)](#), [2170 \(2014\)](#), [2195 \(2014\)](#), [2199 \(2015\)](#), [2249 \(2015\)](#), [2253 \(2015\)](#) and [2322 \(2016\)](#), as well as its Presidential Statement [S/PRST/2012/26](#),

*Taking note* of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) General Conference's resolution 38 C/48, by which Member States have adopted the Strategy for the Reinforcement of UNESCO's Actions for the Protection of Culture and the Promotion of Cultural Pluralism in the Event of Armed Conflict, and have invited the Director General to elaborate an action plan in order to implement the strategy,

*Reaffirming* its primary responsibility for maintenance of international peace and security, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, and *reaffirming further* the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

*Reaffirming* that terrorism in all forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security and that any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable regardless of their motivations, whenever and by whomsoever committed,

*Emphasizing* that the unlawful destruction of cultural heritage, and the looting and smuggling of cultural property in the event of armed conflicts, notably by terrorist groups, and the attempt to deny historical roots and cultural diversity in this context can fuel and exacerbate conflict and hamper post-conflict national reconciliation, thereby undermining the security, stability, governance, social, economic and cultural development of affected States,

*Noting with grave concern* the involvement of non-state actors, notably terrorist groups, in the destruction of cultural heritage and the trafficking in cultural property and related offences, in particular at the continued threat posed to international peace and security by the Islamic state in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL,



also known as Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, and *reaffirming* its resolve to address all aspects of that threat,

*Also noting with concern* that the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities are generating income from engaging directly or indirectly in the illegal excavation and in the looting and smuggling of cultural property from archaeological sites, museums, libraries, archives, and other sites, which is being used to support their recruitment efforts and to strengthen their operational capability to organize and carry out terrorist attacks,

*Noting with grave concern* the serious threat posed to cultural heritage by landmines and unexploded ordnance,

*Strongly concerned* about the links between the activities of terrorists and organized criminal groups that, in some cases, facilitate criminal activities, including trafficking in cultural property, illegal revenues and financial flows as well as money-laundering, bribery and corruption,

*Recalling* Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) which requires that all States shall prevent and suppress the financing of terrorist acts and refrain from providing any form of support, active or passive, to individuals, groups, undertakings or entities involved in such acts, and other resolutions that emphasize the need for Member States to continue exercising vigilance over relevant financial transactions and improve information-sharing capabilities and practices, in line with applicable international law, within and between governments through relevant authorities,

*Recognizing* the indispensable role of international cooperation in crime prevention and criminal justice responses to counter trafficking in cultural property and related offences in a comprehensive and effective manner, *stressing* that the development and maintenance of fair and effective criminal justice systems should be a part of any strategy to counter terrorism and transnational organized crime and *recalling* in this respect the provisions of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto,

*Recalling* the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict of 14 May 1954 and its Protocols of 14 May 1954 and 26 March 1999, the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property of 14 November 1970, the Convention concerning the protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage of 16 November 1972, the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions,

*Noting* the ongoing efforts of the Council of Europe Committee on Offences relating to Cultural Property concerning a legal framework to address illicit trafficking in cultural property,

*Commending* the efforts undertaken by Member States in order to protect and safeguard cultural heritage in the context of armed conflicts and *taking note* of the Declaration issued by Ministers of Culture participating in the International Conference "Culture as an Instrument of Dialogue among Peoples", held in Milan

on 31 July-1 August 2015 as well as the International Conference on the victims of ethnic and religious violence in the Middle East, held in Paris on 8 September 2015, and the Conference on Safeguarding Endangered Cultural Heritage held in Abu Dhabi on 3 December 2016 and its declaration,

*Welcoming* the central role played by UNESCO in protecting cultural heritage and promoting culture as an instrument to bring people closer together and foster dialogue, including through the #Unite4Heritage campaign, and the central role of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and INTERPOL in preventing and countering all forms and aspects of trafficking in cultural property and related offences, including through fostering broad law enforcement and judicial cooperation, and in raising awareness on such trafficking,

*Also recognizing* the role of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team of 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee, in identifying and raising awareness on the challenges related to the illicit trade of cultural property as it relates to the financing of terrorism pursuant to resolutions [2199 \(2015\)](#) and [2253 \(2015\)](#), and *welcoming* the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) guidance on recommendation 5 on the criminalization of terrorist financing for any purpose, in line with these resolutions,

*Expressing in this regard concern* at the continuing use in a globalized society, by terrorists and their supporters, of new information and communications technologies, in particular the Internet, to facilitate terrorist acts, and condemning their use to fund terrorist acts through the illicit trade in cultural property,

*Underlining* the importance that all relevant United Nations entities coordinate their efforts while implementing their respective mandates,

*Noting* the recent decision by the International Criminal Court, which for the first time convicted a defendant for the war crimes of intentionally directing attacks against religious buildings and historic monuments and buildings,

1. *Deplores and condemns* the unlawful destruction of cultural heritage, inter alia destruction of religious sites and artefacts, as well as the looting and smuggling of cultural property from archaeological sites, museums, libraries, archives, and other sites, in the context of armed conflicts, notably by terrorist groups;

2. *Recalls* its condemnation of any engagement in direct or indirect trade involving ISIL, Al-Nusra Front (ANF) and all other individuals, groups, undertakings and entities associated with Al-Qaida, and *reiterates* that such engagement could constitute financial support for entities designated by the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee and may lead to further listings by the Committee;

3. *Also condemns* systematic campaigns of illegal excavation, and looting and pillage of cultural heritage, in particular those committed by ISIL, Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities;

4. *Affirms* that directing unlawful attacks against sites and buildings dedicated to religion, education, art, science or charitable purposes, or historic monuments may constitute, under certain circumstances and pursuant to

international law a war crime and that perpetrators of such attacks must be brought to justice;

5. *Stresses* that Member States have the primary responsibility in protecting their cultural heritage and that efforts to protect cultural heritage in the context of armed conflicts should be in conformity with the Charter, including its purposes and principles, and international law, and should respect the sovereignty of all States;

6. *Invites*, in this regard, the United Nations and all other relevant organizations to continue providing Member States, upon their request and based on their identified needs, with all necessary assistance;

7. *Encourages* all Member States that have not yet done so to consider ratifying the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict of 14 May 1954 and its Protocols, as well as other relevant international conventions;

8. *Requests* Member States to take appropriate steps to prevent and counter the illicit trade and trafficking in cultural property and other items of archaeological, historical, cultural, rare scientific, and religious importance originating from a context of armed conflict, notably from terrorist groups, including by prohibiting cross-border trade in such illicit items where States have a reasonable suspicion that the items originate from a context of armed conflict, notably from terrorist groups, and which lack clearly documented and certified provenance, thereby allowing for their eventual safe return, in particular items illegally removed from Iraq since 6 August 1990 and from Syria since 15 March 2011, and *recalls* in this regard that States shall ensure that no funds, other financial assets or other economic resources are made available, directly or indirectly, by their nationals or persons within their territory for the benefit of ISIL and individuals, groups, entities or undertakings associated with ISIL or Al-Qaida in accordance with relevant resolutions;

9. *Urges* Member States to introduce effective national measures at the legislative and operational levels where appropriate, and in accordance with obligations and commitments under international law and national instruments, to prevent and counter trafficking in cultural property and related offences, including by considering to designate such activities that may benefit organized criminal groups, terrorists or terrorist groups, as a serious crime in accordance with article 2(b) of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime;

10. *Encourages* Member States to propose listings of ISIL, Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities involved in the illicit trade in cultural property to be considered by the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee, that meet the designation criteria set forth in resolutions [1267 \(1999\)](#), [1989 \(2011\)](#) and [2253 \(2015\)](#);

11. *Urges* Member States to develop, including, upon request, with the assistance of UNODC, in cooperation with UNESCO and INTERPOL as appropriate, broad law enforcement and judicial cooperation in preventing and countering all forms and aspects of trafficking in cultural property and related offences that benefit or may benefit organized criminal groups, terrorists or terrorist groups;

12. *Calls upon* Member States to request and provide cooperation in investigations, prosecutions, seizure and confiscation as well as the return, restitution or repatriation of trafficked, illicitly exported or imported, stolen, looted, illicitly excavated or illicitly traded cultural property, and judicial proceedings, through appropriate channels and in accordance with domestic legal frameworks as well as with the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto and relevant regional, subregional and bilateral agreements;

13. *Welcomes* the actions undertaken by UNESCO within its mandate to safeguard and preserve cultural heritage in peril and actions for the protection of culture and the promotion of cultural pluralism in the event of armed conflict, and *encourages* Member States to support such actions;

14. *Encourages* Member States to enhance, as appropriate, bilateral, subregional and regional cooperation through joint initiatives within the scope of relevant UNESCO programmes;

15. *Takes note of* the UNESCO Heritage emergency fund as well as of the international fund for the protection of endangered cultural heritage in armed conflict as announced in Abu Dhabi on 3 December 2016, and of other initiatives in this regard, and *encourages* Member States to provide financial contributions to support preventive and emergency operations, fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural property, as well as undertake all appropriate efforts for the recovery of cultural heritage, in the spirit of the principles of the UNESCO Conventions;

16. *Also encourages* Member States to take preventive measures to safeguard their nationally owned cultural property and their other cultural property of national importance in the context of armed conflicts, including as appropriate through documentation and consolidation of their cultural property in a network of “safe havens” in their own territories to protect their property, while taking into account the cultural, geographic, and historic specificities of the cultural heritage in need of protection, and notes the draft UNESCO Action Plan, which contains several suggestions to facilitate these activities;

17. *Calls upon* Member States, in order to prevent and counter trafficking of cultural property illegally appropriated and exported in the context of armed conflicts, notably by terrorist groups, to consider adopting the following measures, in relation to such cultural property:

(a) Introducing or improving cultural heritage’s and properties’ local and national inventory lists, including through digitalized information when possible, and making them easily accessible to relevant authorities and agencies, as appropriate;

(b) Adopting adequate and effective regulations on export and import, including certification of provenance where appropriate, of cultural property, consistent with international standards;

(c) Supporting and contributing to update the World Customs Organization (WCO) Harmonized System Nomenclature and Classification of Goods;

(d) Establishing, where appropriate, in accordance with national legislation and procedures, specialized units in central and local administrations as well as

appointing customs and law enforcement dedicated personnel, and providing them, as well as public prosecutors, with effective tools and adequate training;

(e) Establishing procedures and where appropriate databases devoted to collect information on criminal activities related to cultural property and on illicitly excavated, exported, imported or traded, stolen, trafficked or missing cultural property;

(f) Using and contributing to the INTERPOL Database of Stolen Works of Art, UNESCO Database of National Cultural Heritage Laws, and WCO ARCHEO Platform, and relevant current national databases, as well as providing relevant data and information, as appropriate, on investigations and prosecutions of relevant crimes and related outcome to UNODC portal SHERLOC and on seizures of cultural property to the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team;

(g) Engaging museums, relevant business associations and antiquities market participants on standards of provenance documentation, differentiated due diligence and all measures to prevent the trade of stolen or illegally traded cultural property;

(h) Providing, where available, to relevant industry stakeholders and associations operating within their jurisdiction lists of archaeological sites, museums and excavation storage houses that are located in territory under the control of ISIL or any other group listed by the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee;

(i) Creating educational programmes at all levels on the protection of cultural heritage as well as raising public awareness about illicit trafficking of cultural property and its prevention;

(j) Taking appropriate steps to inventory cultural property and other items of archaeological, historical, cultural, rare scientific and religious importance which have been illegally removed, displaced or transferred from armed conflict areas, and coordinate with relevant UN entities and international actors, in order to ensure the safe return of all listed items;

18. *Encourages* Members States, relevant United Nations entities, in accordance with their existing mandate, and international actors in a position to do so to provide assistance in demining of cultural sites and objects upon request of affected States;

19. *Affirms* that the mandate of United Nations peacekeeping operations, when specifically mandated by the Security Council and in accordance with their rules of engagement, may encompass, as appropriate, assisting relevant authorities, upon their request, in the protection of cultural heritage from destruction, illicit excavation, looting and smuggling in the context of armed conflicts, in collaboration with UNESCO, and that such operations should operate carefully when in the vicinity of cultural and historical sites;

20. *Calls upon* UNESCO, UNODC, INTERPOL, WCO and other relevant international organizations, as appropriate and within their existing mandates, to assist Member States in their efforts to prevent and counter destruction and looting of and trafficking in cultural property in all forms;

21. *Requests* the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team of the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee to continue, within its existing mandate, to provide the Committee with relevant information regarding the illicit trade of cultural property;

22. *Also requests* the Secretary-General, with the support of UNODC, UNESCO and the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team of the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee, as well as other relevant United Nations bodies, to submit to the Council a report on the implementation of the present resolution before the end of the year;

23. *Decides* to remain actively seized of the matter.

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