



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

International coordination Conference on the Safeguarding of Cultural Heritage in Liberated Areas of Iraq – 23/24 February 2017



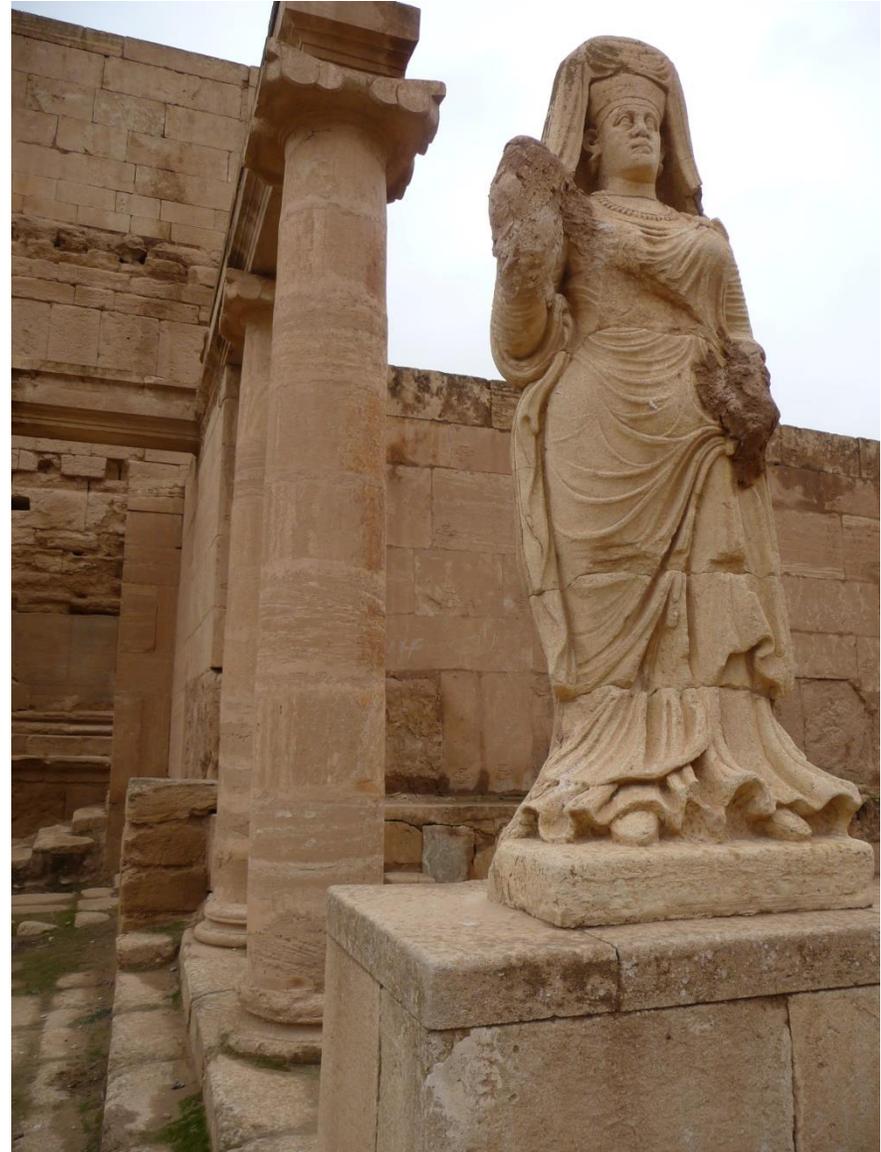
متحدون مع التراث  UNITE4HERITAGE



From
the People
of Japan

Conference Organization and Support

- Organized by UNESCO and the Ministry for Culture of Iraq
- With financial support by the government of Japan in the framework of the project for "Preventive Conservation of Iraq's Museum Collections and Cultural Heritage at Imminent Risk", carried out by the UNESCO Iraq Office

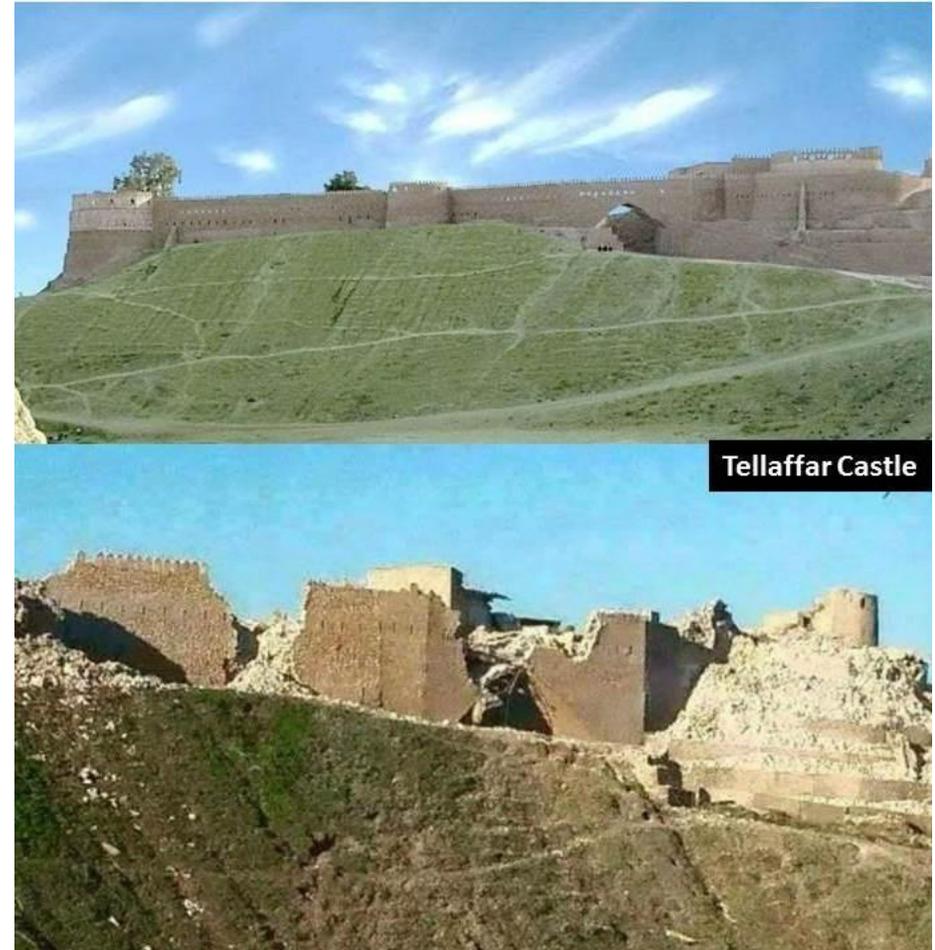


Participation

- ***The National Commission and the Permanent Delegation of Iraq to UNESCO***
- ***The Ministry of Culture of Iraq***, comprising of the Minister, the Vice-Minister for Antiquities and Tourism affairs, and directors of the various departments in the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage (SBAH).
- ***Religious Endowments of Iraq***
- ***Iraqi and international experts***
- ***Institutional Partners: ICOMOS, The Arab Regional Center for World Heritage (ARC-WH), ICCROM, ICOM, INTERPOL, ALECSO, ISESCO, Cultural institutions and museums.***
- ***International and national experts***

Six Thematic Sessions

- World Heritage and Tentative List Sites
- Archaeological Sites at large
- Religious Heritage
- Historical Buildings and Urban Heritage
- Museums and Museum Collections
- Historical Manuscripts



Main Outputs

- Damage Assessment of cultural heritage, religious heritage, museums, and movable heritage in the liberated, and soon to be liberated areas;
- Setting up of priority actions in the short and medium terms;
- Mapping of ongoing and planned activities implemented by the various stakeholders and partners;
- Establishment and agreement on a mechanism for the coordination of actions.
- **A comprehensive prioritized action plan will compile the outputs of the meeting and be continuously updated**

General Conclusions

The International Coordination Conference provided an important opportunity to:

- Meet and listen to our Iraqi partners who provided a state of the art of the extremely dramatic situation in the liberated, and soon-to-be liberated areas of Iraq
- Raise the awareness of the international community on the level of devastation, which is much higher than what the international community was aware of
- Acknowledge the extent of intentional destructions that constitute a considerable collective trauma
- Most of the destructions are totally irreversible; the loss of our shared history is immense
- The humanitarian conditions, the effects of the persecution of local communities
- Consequently, the magnitude of the needs is equally immense and much higher than what we foresaw
- The scale of the ongoing initiatives is very far from being sufficient
- The gaps identified are very important and require a strong support by the international community

General Conclusions

Emphasis was given on the moral support to the Iraqi population by:

- Valuing and raising awareness on Iraqi cultural heritage at the international level, through new inscriptions on the World Heritage List
- International exhibitions on Iraq's cultural heritage
- The continuation of the #Unite4Heritage Campaign initiatives.

Outcomes of the Conference

- The Conference has allowed defining the elements needed for the Action Plan in the 6 themes: with regard to damage assessment, ongoing initiatives, and short and medium term needs
- The Action Plan will be drafted based on the Conference outcomes, finalized and shared by UNESCO
- The Action Plan should be seen as a working document that will constantly evolve
- The actions envisaged need not be broad in scope; they need to be targeted to specific technical, operational and effective actions, and strictly based on the needs of Iraq



World Heritage and Tentative List sites

Archaeological sites

- **Cross-cutting needs at sites**
- Focus on **Ashur** and **Nimrud** (accessible)
- **Hatra, Khorsabad** and a large range of other significant sites will need action when made accessible again

- **Short term needs/conservation**
- Cooperation with the military to be pursued
- Damage assessment to be completed
- First-aid actions on sites to be undertaken
 - Sites to be secured (police and fencing)
 - Debris to be gathered, managed and inventoried – Storage needed
 - Emergency
- Equipment (cars, surveillance cameras, scanners)

World Heritage and Tentative List sites

Archaeological sites

Short term needs/Illicit Trafficking

- Commitment of the UN Member States for the implementation of UNSC Resolution 2199 to be reinforced
- Quick flow of information with UNESCO and Interpol on artefacts at risk, to be ensured
- Return and restitution: soil samples of areas heavily looted to be gathered for potential archaeometric analysis
- Ratification of UNIDROIT 1995 Convention



Winged bull (Lamasu)



World Heritage and Tentative List sites

Archaeological sites

Medium-term

- **Documentation and archives** to be made **available** to Iraq (archaeological missions and institutes, etc.) to prepare future conservation activities
- Documentation and archives to be **digitised**
- **Technical support** : structured training and capacity building programme in several disciplines/ with a calendar



Religious Heritage in the Liberated Areas

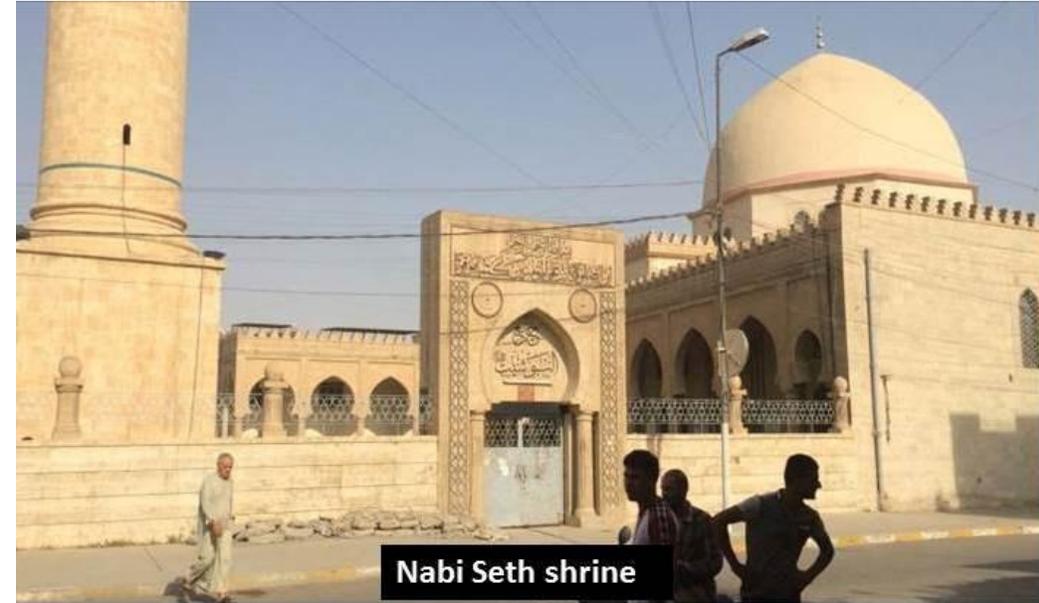
Main topics discussed:

- Statistics and inventories;
- Conservation/rehabilitation/reconstruction approaches;
- Sacred sites shared by different religious communities;
- Coexistence of communities;
- Religious heritage - living heritage – common heritage – cultural identity;
- Capacity-building.

Main needs and priorities identified:

Short Term:

- Inventor and assess all damaged and destroyed religious heritage
- Develop a strategy and comprehensive methodology for all relevant activities, supported by a detailed timeline;
- Define a detailed methodology for reconstruction of religious sites and monuments;
- Develop capacity-building activities;
- Create a network of experts and specialized institutions and provide international expertise and technical support to the Iraqi specialists;



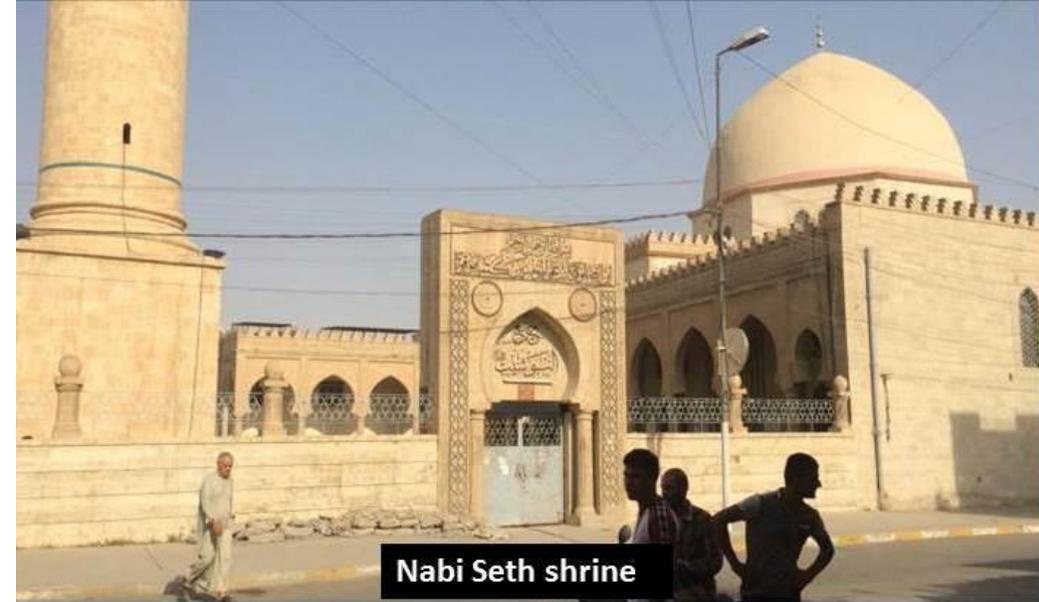
Religious Heritage in the Liberated Areas

Mid Term

- Conduct all rehabilitation projects with involvement of local communities / Reinforce local capacities and promote traditional skills and crafts;

Long Term

- Enhance knowledge of the common history and promote the need for coexistence of communities;
- Rehabilitate peaceful coexistence of the various religious and ethnic groups.



Museums and Museum Collections

Needs

- Assessing damages
- Updating information and databases
- Addressing issues of forgeries
- Need for coordination
- Capacity building
- Equipping museums



Key Actions

- Protection of museums after liberation; planning for long term recovery with community involvement
- Review of existing mechanism for reinforcing the documentation of museums and collections
- Comprehensive conservation assessment
- Reinforcing coordination and actions to implement resolution 2199
- Identifying missing collections and disseminating information
- Exploring modalities to reinforce due diligence on provenance proof and background of objects
- Capacity building in preventive conservation
- Identifying materials and equipment

Historical Buildings and Urban Heritage

Current measures undertaken

- The ongoing coordination between the authorities dealing with culture and heritage and the military forces to preserve the urban and architectural heritage during the military operations is an important measure that needs to be pursued and reinforced;
- The current assessment of the situation of heritage buildings provides essential information about the damage and needs to be reinforced and extended to the urban fabric and the other components of urban heritage (buildings, urban pattern and spaces, intangible heritage, cultural expressions, natural heritage, etc.).

Key items to be considered for future actions

- Essential to consider the protection and conservation of cities' heritage at the urban level, taking into account all the components of urban heritage;
- Need to reflect on the issue of reconstruction of the destroyed heritage and take the necessary time for that;
- Priority should be given to the revival of cities and villages once liberated in order to provide the best conditions for the restoration and conservation of heritage;
- Coordination with all relevant national and local authorities which have a key role in the urbanization and urban development processes;
- A global approach to urban heritage protection and conservation, ideally at national level, is essential prior to any local action.

Historical Manuscripts

Ongoing Initiatives

- comprehensive inventory and cataloguing of all manuscript collections as they stand today
- comprehensive microfilming and data storage of all manuscripts, to guard against future losses
- restoration and conservation of the manuscripts

Needs

- A comparative damage assessment study
- Compiling a list of manuscripts protected by different national organizations
- Technical devices to accelerate restoration and documentation
- Capacity-building and awareness-raising
- Preparing a list of stolen manuscripts

International Coordination Mechanism

Objectives

Coordination at the national level

- Monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan, regular review and updating
- Advocacy for sustained international support for the safeguarding of cultural heritage in Iraq
- Avoiding overlaps and promote synergies in international assistance
- Advising on cultural heritage protection and conservation projects and initiatives to ensure full alignment with international standards

Establishment of a Joint Steering Committee

- Chaired by the Ministry of Culture
- UNESCO acts as co-chair
- Comprises key donors and experts in Iraq
- Meets regularly
- Monitors the Action Plan, and more broadly international assistance for cultural heritage protection and conservation
- Supported by an international expert group



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An appeal for Culture at Risk

Contribute to the Heritage Emergency Fund



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