

Amman Declaration on the prevention and response to theft and looting of cultural objects from museums and sites.

We, the participants of the Expert Meeting “Museum Theft Response Plan” assembled in Amman, Jordan:

1. express our gratitude to the organizers for having provided a forum of discussions on the preservation and protection of heritage;
2. take into account the recent civil uprising in the Arab States that place museums and archaeological sites at risk, resulting in thefts, looting, vandalism, as well as illicit trafficking and trade in cultural property;
3. recognize the importance of the cultural heritage of the Arab States, an invaluable testament to the world’s history;
4. recall the international conventions and national policies put in place for the protection and preservation of the Cultural Heritage of the Arab States, and strongly recommending the ratification of the UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970), the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two protocols (1954) and the UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects (1995);
5. recommend the following actions to be implemented to prevent and respond to situations putting heritage at risk:

A. Preventing theft

Governance

A.1 Carry out risk analysis for museums and sites in order to be adequately prepared for and to have suitable mechanisms in place to address emergency situations.

A.2 Write effective and clear mitigation and response plans for natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, fires, and man-made disasters such as accidents, conflicts, thefts, terrorist attacks.

A.3 Establish a crisis unit to be in charge of coordinating staff in an emergency situation, as well as implementing regular exercises with staff.

Security and safety

A.4 Carry out regular condition assessments of the museum buildings in conformity with the identified security requirements.

A.5 Provide museums with suitable security equipment and secured display materials

Collections management

- A.6 Regularly update insurance coverage of the most valuable objects.
- A.7 Establish and update coherent collection documentation systems within museums and archives and implement regular inventories for objects on display and in storage.
- A.8 Establish a clear policy and protocol of accession and loans.

Staffing

A.9 Invest in capacity-building of museum and site staff both in technical and ethical aspects. Codes of ethics for heritage professionals should be made available to and observed by staff.

A.10 Motivate and grant incentive and adequate salaries to museum guards to ensure a high performance during duty.

Public Outreach

A.11 Raise awareness on the negative economic, social and cultural effects of theft, looting and illicit trade in cultural objects at governmental, organizational, and personal levels. Educational programme for children should be created and promoted.

A.12 Establish and support inter-museum associations to foster advocacy for museums.

A.13 Establish museum membership programs to sustain museums financially and to multiply cooperation opportunities.

B. Response to theft

B.1. Preserve the evidence of theft process without altering.

B.2. Provide necessary information for and collaborate with the investigation (recording, fingerprints, video, list of witnesses).

B.3 Gather records and information on missing objects by means of inventories to establish the object's identity with photographs, dimensions and other specifications.

B.4 Communicate the information to relevant authorities (national police, customs, international organizations, such as Interpol and UNESCO) as well as databases dedicated to stolen objects (Interpol, Art loss register, Carabinieri).

B.5 Work with local and national media in order to alert public opinion of theft if deemed necessary.

B.6 Consider establishing rewards for restitution of stolen or misplaced objects

B.7 Consider hiring private investigators when necessary.

Amman, Jordan

Participants to the Expert Meeting "Museum Theft Response Plan", 12-13 June 2011

The signatories, declare that the above mentioned actions are of high priority to our institutions. We will distribute and disseminate these recommendations through our professional network.

Signatories:

1. Technological Educational Institute of Athens, (TEI).
2. Rathgen Research Laboratory, National Museums Berlin, Germany.
3. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO.
4. ICOM
5. Department of Antiquities of Jordan.
6. The Directorate for the Documentation and Protection of Cultural Goods, Hellenic Ministry of Culture & Tourism.
7. Children's Museum, Egyptian Museum Cairo, Egypt.
8. ANEMON Production, Greece
9. University of Cyprus, Department of History and Archaeology.
10. Marfin Laiki Bank Cultural Centre, Cyprus

11. Children's Alliance for Tradition and Social Engagement (CATS e.V.), Germany.
12. International Committee on Museum Security