



## **ICOMOS Statement on Safeguarding Yemen's cultural heritage during the on-going armed conflict**

Paris, 23 April 2015

In the face of the escalating armed conflict and military intervention in Yemen and the ensuing growing humanitarian emergency, ICOMOS, the International Council on Monuments and Sites, expresses its continuing deep concern for the protection of cultural property in Yemen at risk from the hostilities.

The cultural heritage of Yemen is a unique and irreplaceable witness of its rich and diverse history. Damage to it represents an irretrievable loss to the cultural heritage of all peoples in the world. Yemen as one of the ancient centres of civilization of the Middle East and North Africa is home to some very significant ancient and Islamic sites.

[Yemen has three cultural and one natural site on the UNESCO World Heritage List](#) and ten other cultural and natural properties are included on its Tentative List.

Yemen's Cultural World Heritage Sites are:

- Historic Town of Zabid
- Old city of Sana'a
- Old Walled City of Shibam

In addition to its World Heritage properties, many other places such as the old town of Mukallah, the cities of Tarim, Shibam Cocoban, and Rada'a, the archaeological site of Ma'in and the cultural landscape of Wadi Do'an are of great cultural importance.

The museums and collections of Yemen, particularly the National Museum of Yemen in Sana'a, are repositories of ancient, Islamic and folkloric artefacts and documents, as well as the manuscript libraries in Tarim, Sana'a and Zabid.

ICOMOS supports and reiterates the [call already launched by UNESCO on 27 March](#), to protect Yemen's cultural heritage, and urges all parties involved in this armed conflict, including State and non-State actors and the members of the regional coalition engaging in military operations in Yemen, to respect and protect cultural properties and refrain from any attack or act of hostility directed against movable or immovable cultural properties, by shelling or by air strikes, or by using cultural heritage sites and buildings and their immediate surroundings for military purposes.

By recalling the international humanitarian law, and in particular the [1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict](#), the additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions; and customary international law, ICOMOS calls on all armed forces and countries who are fighting on the ground or leading airstrikes to spare all types of cultural property, including but not limited to those on the UNESCO World Heritage and Tentative lists.

ICOMOS expresses its solidarity with Yemeni cultural heritage organizations and professionals, and supports their appeal for the protection and safeguarding of cultural properties during and after the end of the current armed conflict.

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**ICOMOS**, the International Council on Monuments and Sites, is a unique, non-governmental, not for profit international organisation, committed to furthering the conservation, protection, use and enhancement of the world's cultural heritage.

As an official advisory body to the World Heritage Committee for the implementation of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, ICOMOS evaluates nominations and advises on the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List.

ICOMOS is one of the founding members of the Blue Shield network, working to protect the world's cultural heritage threatened by armed conflict, natural and man-made disasters.

For more information see [www.icomos.org](http://www.icomos.org)