



Resolutions of the General Assembly

18GA Agenda item 8-6
Heritage at Risk (resolutions on site related matters)

Resolution 18GA 2014/21 Resolution for the safeguarding of cultural heritage in Syria and Iraq

The 18th General Assembly of ICOMOS,

Noting with significant concern, the tragic impact of the on-going armed conflict in Syria since March 2011, which has led to a grave loss of every type of cultural heritage in Syria, including old cities, historical monuments, archaeological sites and collections;

Taking into account that all six World Heritage properties in Syria are now inscribed on UNESCO's "World Heritage in Danger" list, and that other cultural properties of the World Heritage Tentative List have been heavily looted or damaged, and hundreds of other built heritage structures in historic cities and villages, including those with national and local cultural values, have sustained irreversible damage and theft;

Considering also the conflict situation in Iraq and lack of respect for the international principles for the protection of cultural heritage, including the deliberate destruction of places of worship and other cultural symbols belonging to people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds;

Noting with great concern that to date three million Syrians have fled the country and six million Syrians have been internally displaced due to the ongoing conflict, and more than one million Iraqis have been forced to leave their homes because of the recent crisis, which has significantly and adversely affected the protection and safeguarding of cultural heritage;

Recalling ICOMOS' statements of July 2012, September 2012, March 2013, July 2013, and August 2013 on cultural heritage in Syria, Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, and the serious concern for the continued intentional and planned destruction of cultural heritage places and symbols frequently belonging to minorities, including Sufi, Christian and earlier heritage, in the Middle East and North Africa;

Taking into account that because of these dramatic events, the cultural richness and diversity in Syria and Iraq is also seriously in danger;

Fearing that large-scale hasty demolition and reconstruction works may threaten the authenticity and integrity of the heritage if no adequate guidelines for restoration, rehabilitation and planning are readily made available;

Acknowledging the role of ICOMOS, its Syrian and regional members, its International Scientific Committee on Risk Preparedness (ICORP), and particularly the ICOMOS « ad hoc » Working Group for Syria and Iraq, in monitoring the situation of cultural heritage in these countries, in informing the media, in providing assistance to local authorities, in participating in the definition of international programmes and its pioneering initiative of conducting distance training for Syrian cultural heritage professionals in 2013, using state-of-the-art communication technology;

Considering the partnership of ICOMOS with UNESCO in its project for Emergency Safeguarding of Syrian Heritage and its plan for Safeguarding of Iraq's Cultural Heritage;

Requests the Executive Committee to continue to respond to the cultural tragedy in Syria and Iraq by tasking the ICOMOS Working Group on the safeguarding of the cultural heritage in Syria and Iraq, in cooperation with UNESCO and other international and national partners, and with the support of ICORP, to coordinate the activities of ICOMOS related to fostering cooperation and exchanges, monitoring, awareness raising, communication, training, assisting and planning for the safeguarding of cultural heritage in Syria and Iraq, as long as the present conflict and its subsequent consequences continue.