



# ICBS

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF  
THE BLUE SHIELD

JOAN VAN ALBADA  
PRESIDENT

## Statement by ICBS on the impact of Hurricane Katrina on the cultural heritage of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama

The International Committee of the Blue Shield (ICBS) expresses its sorrow and solidarity with the American people and in particular with the population of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama for the loss of lives and for the terrible disruption of their livelihood caused by hurricane Katrina and the ensuing floods.

Although the highest priorities must be accorded to minimising the loss of life and to the humanitarian activities intended to re-establish decent living conditions for the hundreds of thousands of people whose homes and means of subsistence have been wrecked by this natural disaster, the International Committee of the Blue Shield must express its profound concern for the fate of the cultural heritage in the affected states.

ICBS wishes to emphasise that the cultural heritage of a community reflects its way of life, its history and identity, provides the link between its past, present and future, and contributes substantially to its economic sustainability and welfare. A community cannot function effectively in the larger societal context if deprived of its identity through the loss of its cultural heritage.

ICBS, therefore, calls on the Federal Government of the United States of America, and on the Governments of the States of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama to swiftly draw up and implement plans to ensure the survival and restoration of historic buildings and sites, museums collections, books in libraries, and documents in archives.

ICBS also calls on the international community to give the fullest possible support to the efforts, official and voluntary, now being made by United States citizens and agencies to rescue the rich and unique heritage of New Orleans and other cities and towns in the region.

Paris, 12 September 2005

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THE ICBS WORKS TO PROTECT CULTURAL PROPERTY IN THE EVENT OF NATURAL AND HUMAN DISASTER.  
IT COMPRISES THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON ARCHIVES (ICA),  
THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF MUSEUMS (ICOM),  
THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES (ICOMOS) AND  
THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS (IFLA)



The Blue Shield network is the cultural equivalent of the Red Cross and strives to protect cultural objects and sites in the event of natural or man-made disasters.

The International Committee of the Blue Shield, founded in 1996, comprises representatives of the four Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) working in this field

- the International Council on Archives ([www.ica.org](http://www.ica.org)),
- the International Council of Museums ([www.icom.org](http://www.icom.org)),
- the International Council on Monuments and Sites ([www.icomos.org](http://www.icomos.org)), and
- the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions ([www.ifla.org](http://www.ifla.org))

and it works in co-operation with UNESCO, the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The status of the ICBS as an ‘eminent professional organisation’, which has a formal relationship with UNESCO and an important advisory role, has been recognised in the 2nd Protocol (1999) of the Hague Convention (1954) for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict.

Further information about ICBS is available from its website (<http://www.ifla.org/blueshield.htm>)