The Destruction of Heritage Sites in the Middle East

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2016
Overview

1. A Civil War
   - Syrian government
   - Hijackers
   - United States, Turkey, Arab nations
   - Foreign fighters

2. A War Against ISIS
   - Islamic State
   - United States
   - Kurds
   - Australia, Bahrain, Canada, France, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and United Arab Emirates
Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property
Motivation

• Ideological
  • Salafism

• Political
  • Erasure of culture

• Sensational
  • Media Coverage

• Financial
Results

• [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f83i5k6EgTs&index=5&list=PLAtfWAdHzWmBiIJ-evsIWiIgLcr8w8uS0n/](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f83i5k6EgTs&index=5&list=PLAtfWAdHzWmBiIJ-evsIWiIgLcr8w8uS0n/)
Destruction in Iraq

Fall of Mosul
List of World Heritage Sites in Iraq

Cultural (4)
- Ashur (Qal‘at Sherqat) (2003)
- Erbil Citadel (2014)
- Hatra (1985)
- Samarra Archaeological City (2007)

Mixed (1)
- The Ahwar of Southern Iraq: Refuge of Biodiversity and the Relict Landscape of the Mesopotamian Cities (2016)
The Fall of Mosul

- June 10th-14th 2014
- City in Northern Iraq
- ISIS released a video showing members using sledgehammers to smash some of the city’s ancient artifacts
- Overnight, the city was transformed and sharia law was imposed
THE ISIS CONFLICT

ISIS Destroys Mosul Museum Artifacts
Destruction of the Library

- February 2015
- 100,000 books and manuscripts destroyed
Destruction in Syria

Site of Palmyra
List of World Heritage Sites in Syria

Properties inscribed on the World Heritage List (6)

Cultural (6)
- Ancient City of Aleppo (1986)
- Ancient City of Bosra (1980)
- Ancient City of Damascus (1979)
- Ancient Villages of Northern Syria (2011)
- Crac des Chevaliers and Qal’at Salah El-Din (2006)
- Site of Palmyra (1980)
Destruction of the Site of Palmyra


Other Heritage Sites

Aleppo
Role of the UN

UNESCO

MIDDLE EAST

U.N. Resolves to Combat Plundering of Antiquities by ISIS

By RICK GLADSTONE  MAY 28, 2015
UNESCO

• United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
  • “contribute to peace and security by promoting international collaboration through education, science, and culture”

• 21 May 2015 Resolution

• 40th World Heritage Committee Session
#Unite4Heritage: The Story So Far
Sustainable Development Goal 16

Goal 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions

UNDP: “Peace, stability, human rights and effective governance are important conduits for sustainable development”
Solutions

• Unfortunately, where ISIL still holds territory with heritage sites, not much can be done

• The work of UNESCO and other organizations like the Global Heritage Fund is making progress in restoration and prevention
Thank you

“We are one humanity…In any culture there are outstanding objects and sites of outstanding universal value.”

-Irina Bokova


