

## Abu Dhabi International Conference to Protect the Cultural Heritage in danger

### Final Declaration

Paris, Washington DC, Abu Dhabi, 04.12.2016, 23:52 Time

**USPA NEWS** - The Abu Dhabi International Conference on the Protection of the Cultural Heritage in Danger was co-chaired by the French President Hollande and His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. It coincides with the 45th National day of United Arab Emirate

#### FINAL DECLARATION OF ABU DHABI INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE TO SAFEGUARD HERITAGE-----

"Mirror of our humanity, guardian of our collective memory and witness of the extraordinary spirit of creation of humanity, the world cultural heritage carries within it our common future. Today, armed conflicts and terrorism on all continents affect millions of men and women without sparing their heritage over a millennium. Extremists are violently and sometimes deliberately attacking the cultures of the countries and peoples they devastate, seeking to destroy the cultural heritage, the common good of humanity.-----

Threatening, attacking, destroying and plundering the heritage, amounts to attacking the very foundations of the identity of peoples, the history in which they are inscribed and the landmarks on which they are built. Without this heritage, it is the entire identity of a people that disappears, its memory disappears and its future compromised. Heritage, in its diversity, is a source of collective wealth and encourages dialogue. It is a factor of rapprochement, tolerance, freedom and respect. Its destruction represents a threat to peace, as is the illicit traffic in cultural property, whose development is often the corollary of times of crisis. Consequently, we Heads of State and Government and their representatives have gathered in Abu Dhabi to reaffirm our common will to safeguard the endangered cultural heritage of all peoples against its destruction and illicit trafficking. We decided to join forces." Declared the French President Francois Hollande

#### UNESCO SUPPORTS THE GLOBAL COALITION "UNITED FOR HERITAGE"-----

"We welcome the call made by the General Director of UNESCO and express our support for the Global Coalition "United for Heritage" which has been launched to protect our common heritage from destruction and trafficking. We welcome the Strategy for Strengthening UNESCO's Action for the Protection of Culture and the Promotion of Cultural Pluralism in the Event of Armed Conflict. We must ensure respect for the universal values "which, since the successive International Hague Conventions of 1899, 1907 and 1954 and its Protocols of 1954 and 1999, require us to protect human lives and cultural property in times of armed conflict. This process should be conducted in close liaison with UNESCO, which has been working tirelessly since 1945 to preserve heritage, combat illicit trafficking in cultural property and promote culture as an instrument of rapprochement and dialogue between Peoples.

Therefore, in a spirit of universality and within the framework of the principles of the UNESCO Conventions, we commit ourselves to pursue two ambitious and long-term objectives in order to guarantee the mobilization of the international community to safeguard heritage:

- The establishment of an international fund for the protection of cultural heritage at risk in times of armed conflict, which would finance preventive or emergency actions, combat illicit trafficking in cultural property and participate in restoration Damaged cultural property.
- The creation of an international network of refuges to temporarily safeguard cultural property endangered by armed conflicts or terrorism on their territory or, if they can not be secure at national level, in a neighboring country, Or as a last resort in another country, in accordance with international laws at the request of the governments concerned, taking into account the national and regional characteristics and the context of the cultural property to be protected.

At this conference, we, Heads of State and Government and their representatives, officials and stakeholders, unite our efforts in favor of heritage by supporting international action to safeguard cultural heritage threatened by armed conflict Or terrorism. A follow-up conference will be held in 2017 to evaluate the implementation of the initiatives launched in Abu Dhabi and the first projects financed by the International Fund. We recognize the prominent role of the United Nations and its relevant institutions, in particular UNESCO, which is the only United Nations agency mandated to protect culture. We call on the UN Security Council to solicit its support for the achievement of our objectives, in full agreement with the Charter of the United Nations." the French President Francois Hollande and His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed AL NAHYAN, Crown Prince of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, stated.

**Article online:**

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-10177/abu-dhabi-international-conference-to-protect-the-cultural-heritage-in-danger.html>

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V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Rahma Sophia RACHDI

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