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## U.S. Department of State Partners With International Council of Museums To Fight Illicit Traffic of Libyan Cultural Heritage

### Media Note

**Office of the Spokesperson  
Washington, DC**

**December 16, 2015**

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The U.S. Department of State and the International Council of Museums (ICOM) have launched the [Emergency Red List of Libyan Cultural Objects at Risk](#). The Emergency Red List alerts law enforcement and the collecting community to the types of Libyan cultural objects that are vulnerable to being looted and trafficked. It serves as an important tool in the fight against trafficking by transnational crime organizations and Foreign Terrorist Organizations, such as ISIL.

The United States joins with the international community to urge all parties in Libya and worldwide to respect and protect archaeological, historic, religious, and cultural sites, including museums and archives, and reaffirm that all those who damage or destroy important cultural property must be held accountable. For the past ten years, the State Department has been engaged with private sector partners in several projects to protect and preserve the archaeological heritage of Libya.

The illicit traffic in cultural goods is not a new practice; however, conflicts in the Middle East and Northern Africa have increased its severity. Significant damage and destruction has been done to cultural heritage sites, particularly by ISIL, feeding the networks through which stolen and looted objects travel. In order to fight illicit traffic, we must constantly adapt to emergency situations and new practices, such as internet sales.

The State Department's support of the Red List reflects the United States' commitment to cultural preservation and respect for world heritage. In addition to the Libya Red List, the State Department has supported the publication of lists for [Syria, Iraq](#), Afghanistan, Egypt, Cambodia, China, Central America and Mexico, Haiti, Colombia, and Peru, with more on the way.

For more information, please contact [ECA-Press@state.gov](mailto:ECA-Press@state.gov). For information on ICOM, its action against illicit traffic in cultural goods and its Red Lists of cultural objects at risk, please contact [icom.presse@icom.museum](mailto:icom.presse@icom.museum).