

Joint Statement – October 2021 Manama Statement of Cooperation

MEDIA NOTE

OFFICE OF THE SPOKESPERSON

OCTOBER 28, 2021

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The text of the following statement was released by the Government of the United States of America and the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Begin Text:

The United States of America and the Kingdom of Bahrain, as leaders in the arts and culture sector, recognize they have a unique role to play in combatting criminal misuse of the art and antiquities market, while strengthening responsible trade practices and cultural exchange.

Both countries are alarmed by growing evidence of antiquities looting and trafficking, as well as money laundering and terrorist financing in the wider art market, and believe these activities are a severe threat to the cultural heritage of our nations and the world, as well as the integrity of our marketplaces and museums.

Proud of the long history of collaboration between our countries on both cultural initiatives and law enforcement, the governments of the United States and Bahrain came together for a forum on strengthening bilateral cooperation in the fight against the illicit trade in cultural property and related transnational crimes. The first meeting was held in August of 2021 and identified a number of areas that would benefit from mutual support. We now pledge to work together in this shared mission of cultural heritage protection and preservation through the following steps:

- ◆ **Information Sharing and Network Building:** Establish mechanisms to strengthen information sharing to build networks between counterparts, particularly in the areas of law enforcement, customs and border enforcement, and museums and other cultural institutions.
- ◆ **Capacity Building Programs and Technical Assistance:** Provide capacity building programs and technical assistance to share best practices, expertise, and resources in areas of identified need, such as countering illicit trade, money laundering, and terrorist financing related to illicit trafficking in cultural properties; identifying art and artifact forgeries; and strengthening site and museum security.
- ◆ **Strengthening Legal Frameworks:** Review existing laws and policies and explore areas where they could be improved or strengthened to ensure our respective legal frameworks are comprehensive and consistent, address current needs, and anticipate how they may change in the future.
- ◆ **Awareness Raising:** Raise awareness of the vulnerabilities facing the art and antiquities market from criminal misuse, as well as how to combat them, by conducting outreach to those in government, law enforcement, academia, the museum

community, the art trade, and the general public.

End Text.

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