



# Protecting Cultural Heritage in Times of Conflict

*Contributions from the participants of the International course  
on First Aid to Cultural Heritage in Times of Conflict*



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Edited by  
Simon Lambert and Cynthia Rockwell

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of the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities (MiBAC)



Protecting Cultural Heritage in Times of Conflict: Contributions from the participants  
of the International course on First Aid to Cultural Heritage in Times of Conflict

Edited by Simon Lambert and Cynthia Rockwell

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# List of acronyms

<b>CER</b>	Cultural Emergency Response program (see also PCF), The Netherlands
<b>CHBUN</b>	Cultural Heritage Blue Umbrella Network
<b>CHWB</b>	Cultural Heritage Without Borders, Swedish NGO
<b>DACH</b>	Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage, Palestine
<b>ECOWAS</b>	Economic Community of West African States
<b>EPA</b>	École du Patrimoine Africain [School of African Heritage], Benin
<b>FAC</b>	First Aid to Cultural Heritage in Times of Conflict (ICCRROM courses 2010-2011)
<b>FARC</b>	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
<b>ICANH</b>	Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historia, Colombia
<b>ICCROM</b>	International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property
<b>ICOM</b>	International Council of Museums
<b>ICOMOS</b>	International Council on Monuments and Sites
<b>IDP</b>	Internal Displaced Population
<b>IFLA</b>	International Federation of Library Associations
<b>IGO</b>	Intergovernmental organization
<b>IMC</b>	Implementation Monitoring Council, Kosovo
<b>INTERPOL</b>	International Police Organization
<b>INTERSOS</b>	Rome-based NGO humanitarian agency
<b>IPM</b>	Institute of Monuments of Prizren, Kosovo
<b>IsAIO</b>	Istituto Italiano per l’Africa e l’Oriente [Italian Institute for Africa and the Far East], Rome
<b>KFOR</b>	International Kosovo Forces
<b>LTTE</b>	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, Sri Lanka
<b>MiBAC</b>	Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali [Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities], Italy
<b>NATO</b>	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organization
<b>NWFP</b>	North-West Frontier Province, Pakistan
<b>OSCE</b>	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
<b>PCF</b>	Prince Claus Fund, The Netherlands
<b>PFF</b>	Partnership for the Future (a UNDP program)
<b>PPT</b>	Pro-poor Tourism
<b>PSF</b>	Patrimoine sans frontières [Heritage without Borders], France
<b>SAVE</b>	Supporting Activities that Value the Environment (a USAID program)
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Program
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNMIK</b>	United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development



# Foreword from the Director- General

At a time when – despite our hopes for the peace and progress of humankind – conflicts continue to strike the identity of people through their cultural heritage more ferociously than the worst natural disasters, the international course on First Aid to Cultural Heritage in Times of Conflict could not be more timely.

When the violence abates, a possibility for peace and reconciliation will reopen. Protection of cultural heritage during the conflict can strengthen this possibility, since the heritage bears witness to the inexhaustible progression of civilizations and societies, all of which are precious expressions of a single Humanity.

“First Aid to Cultural Heritage in Times of Conflict” aims to create a critical mass of professionals who can intervene effectively to secure cultural heritage in such times of conflict, and who can work with other actors to integrate this protection into overall planning for peace and recovery.

I would like to take this opportunity to give special thanks to those who now carry the legacy of this course – the former participants of FAC10 and FAC11. Thanks to all who submitted articles for this publication for their hard work and dedication, as well as to the reviewers and editors for their scrupulous work. In addition to thanking ICCROM’s collaborating partners for both editions of the course – UNESCO, the Blue Shield network, the Prince Claus Fund, the Italian Carabinieri Cultural Heritage Protection Unit, the Italian Red Cross *Pionieri di Roma*, the

National Central Library of Florence, and the Nationaal Archief Netherlands – I would like to recognize the important support received from the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities (MiBAC), which has made this initiative possible.

As the course motto says, *Culture cannot wait!* – so without further ado, I cordially invite you to read this unique publication and to reflect on the important messages from which we can all learn.

**Stefano de Caro**  
*ICCROM Director-General*



# Preface

Besides targeting human lives, conflicts have a profound impact on human values, cultures and religions. Increasingly, conflicts target symbols of culture to destroy identities and lead to the deliberate destruction of cultural heritage – but this damage can also be accidental. Looking back at the events that have marked the past 20 years, it is clear that the international community must continue to find mechanisms to improve response to these emergencies.

UNESCO was created in 1945 in the wake of the Second World War to foster a new spirit of collaboration between nations. The preamble to its Constitution reads “Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed.” When ICCROM was initially created in 1956, it was in this same spirit of international collaboration, to provide assistance to those nations facing the challenges of restoring and preserving the tangible symbols of their culture after the war.

More and more, cultural heritage is seen as an instrument for peace and reconciliation. Its protection and conservation can play a key role in rebuilding societies and overcoming the sense of loss and displacement caused by conflict. It is this very principle that has guided ICCROM in the development of an entirely new international course during my mandate as Director-General (2006-2011).

The “First Aid to Cultural Heritage in Times of Conflict” course (FAC) has so far been held in 2010 and 2011 for six and five weeks, respectively. The first two editions of the course

brought together 37 cultural heritage professionals from 33 different countries. Coming from a range of professional backgrounds, they were all committed to improve the protection of cultural heritage in all its shapes and forms when it is under threat before, during or after a conflict situation.

During the course, each participant gave short presentations about the protection of endangered cultural heritage, focusing on their regional, national or professional context. These presentations were so appreciated by both groups that the participants themselves suggested that a publication should be prepared to collect all these experiences and share them with the rest of the world.

It is thus with great esteem for the tremendous work being done by professionals worldwide to safeguard our collective memory that I have the honour and privilege of introducing this unique and inspiring collection of testimonies from the field. Even if much remains to be done to protect cultural heritage in times of conflict, I for one am filled with reassurance when I see the dedication and commitment of this new generation of professionals.

**Mounir Bouchenaki**  
*ICCROM Director-General, 2006-2011*



# Introduction: Developing the courses

Developing effective strategies for disaster preparedness and response has been at the core of ICCROM's training strategy on preventive conservation and risk management of cultural heritage for many years. In 2010, thanks to the interest of the Italian Ministry of Culture in training professionals for the protection of cultural heritage in areas of conflict, the organization shifted its attention from natural disasters to armed conflicts.

This shift in focus required the consideration of a number of issues unique to the asymmetric wars of our time. Primary among them is the deliberate destruction and/or misuse of cultural heritage in order to raise hostilities and propagate different conflict ideologies. Consequently, ICCROM engaged in a careful design process that involved a cross-disciplinary team of conservation professionals, military personnel, humanitarian-aid specialists, legal experts and conflict-resolution specialists. The result was an intensive course programme divided into three key themes: Culture and Conflict; First Aid to Cultural Heritage; and Communication, Logistics and Planning. Collecting testimonies directly from the field, discussing the possible ways of protecting cultural heritage in areas of civil unrest and exploring culture's potential role in promoting peace and recovery were some of the main features of this training.

Central to this training initiative was the idea that culture cannot wait until "normalcy" is restored, and that the cultural sector cannot work in isolation to manage complex emergencies. Accordingly, course sessions included several lectures and interactive activities on working

with the military, humanitarian aid agencies and development organizations. In addition, hands-on training sessions and numerous exercises simulating emergency conditions – held during the course – sought to prepare proactive Cultural First Aiders who would have the ability to secure cultural heritage in highly volatile situations.

The overall pedagogy however, relied heavily on the varied case studies brought by the participants. As a majority of them had been living in conflict-afflicted areas, their first-hand experiences were crucial in analyzing how conflicts impact cultural heritage as well as in identifying the challenges of working in tense situations.

As the course coordinator, I would like to take this opportunity to celebrate the dedication and high motivation of all those involved: the ICCROM staff, the resource-persons, and each and every participant, who turned this shared learning process into a lifetime experience.

**Aparna Tandon**  
*Project Specialist, ICCROM*



# 01 Rescuing endangered cultural heritage

## Rescue during the Belgrade bombing: An example of museum staff initiative

Marija Radin, SERBIA

### Introduction

NATO bombed the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Republic of Serbia and Republic of Montenegro) for three months in 1999, from March 23 until June 10. During this time, a great deal of cultural heritage in Serbia (objects, buildings, cultural landscapes) was damaged or destroyed as a result of direct hits, or as collateral damage.

Kneza Milosa Street, located in the centre of Belgrade, is an example of destruction of cultural heritage as collateral damage during armed conflict. This street had cultural landscape status and its buildings were listed as cultural monuments due to the values of their exteriors and interiors. Their architecture, sculptural façade ornamentation and interior decoration were among the best examples of the academic architecture style in Serbia. In addition, official cabinet chambers and other offices were decorated with collections of modern and contemporary Serbian art – paintings, sculptures, objects of applied art – as the result of a longstanding state policy to collect works by contemporary national artists.

This street and the whole area was bombed as a legitimate military target: on one side of the street were government buildings and on the other side buildings used by the army and police (General Staff of the Armed Forces, Ministry of Defense). During April and May 1999 the street was bombed several times and some buildings were directly hit and destroyed (General Staff of the Armed Forces, Ministry of Defense, the Government of the Republic of Serbia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, etc.); others were damaged by the collapse of adjacent buildings, detonations and shock waves.

This case study presents the rescue of art objects from a damaged government building. The salvage operation was done by ordinary people on the staff of the National Museum in Belgrade. The information and images for this case study were provided by Mr. Ranko Savić, one of the participants and at that time Head of Security of the National Museum.



### The situation

The government building in Kneza Milosa Street housed the works of well-known artists (a collection of Yugoslav 20th-century art) purchased by or donated to the government and ministers over several decades. The collection was non-museum and unavailable for public viewing, but it was documented and curators from the National Museum were helping inventory the collection. Inventory records, as well as the collection itself, were not accessible to the public (Fig. 1).



Figure 1. Art collections in official cabinet chambers. All images - Credit: Ranko Savić.

When bombing began and it became clear that this building could be targeted (due to its residents and location), a proposal was made to the government to evacuate the collection. Evacuation was initially denied by the authorities for some unknown reason (R. Savić, personal communication, 2011), but after some time it was allowed, and 32 paintings and one tapestry were evacuated by curators from the National Museum before any damage occurred (Miljković 2000, 21). The building was

damaged on two occasions – first due to a direct hit to a neighboring building, and a second time when it was bombed on 7th May. By the end, the government building was seriously damaged: one wing collapsed into the basement, doors and windows were blasted from their sockets, glass was shattered and some floors and walls caved in (Fig. 2).



Figure 2. Damage to buildings caused by severe bombing, Belgrade.

The rescue of this collection took place on two occasions after damage had occurred, by a group of about ten people, employees of the National Museum in Belgrade – curators (art historians, archaeologists), the chief of security and several security staff. One of the curators (Nikola Kusovac) had been participating in the inventory of the collection so he knew where the objects were located in the building.

According to R. Savić, it was not a prepared and planned action: the group met in the museum after the first attack and decided to go to the

government building to see if they could salvage something after acquiring permission to enter (the building was guarded by police at all times). They did not wear safety equipment and used a museum vehicle and private car to transport objects from the government building to the museum's storage rooms. Ropes and other material from the museum were used to secure and attach paintings and sculpture (Fig. 3). During trips back and forth they were obliged to obey safety regulations so they moved only in short periods of time between air raids (4).



Figure 3. Transport of art collections using the museum's vehicle.



Figure 4. Cooperation with the government's building security team.

This group salvaged 163 paintings, 68 graphics, 27 drawings and 17 sculptures and stored them in the National Museum's depot. Records on the number of damaged and destroyed objects were not, and still are not accessible to the public. The saved objects were kept in the National Museum, where an exhibition of 52 paintings was held in 2000. The collection was eventually returned to the government

building, which was also reconstructed during 2000 (Miljković 2000, 21).

### Observations

As we have seen, this group of museum employees acted spontaneously, without previous planning or preparation.

The persons who led this action assumed that government employees would not evacuate the collections from the damaged building, since that had not been done before the attack. Nevertheless, they had some help from the government employees (technicians, janitor and security staff) in carrying out the works of art.

Furthermore, time was an important factor in the decision-making process. It was likely that the remaining objects would be further damaged if they stayed where they were. The building could be hit again, the structure could fall and collapse even more, or it could rain. According to one of the participants, these were the reasons the team chose to act fast, as soon as possible (R. Savić, personal communication, 2011).

The team did not use appropriate safety equipment, and entered the building in the same clothes that they wore to work. The main challenge in this rescue operation was the possibility that the participants could get hurt



Figure 5. Condition of the building during the salvage.

in the process: there could be another bombing of the building or its surroundings due to its location or explosions of bombs in this and nearby buildings. Entry and movement in the building were also risky due to its devastated condition, with broken windows and caved-in floors and ceilings.



Figure 6. The salvage was carried out in a hurry.

To understand their motive to evacuate objects from the government building, it is important to know two facts.

First, these people already had some experience in emergency evacuation. During the first weeks of bombing (one month before the government building was bombed), the complete permanent display in the National Museum's main building (thousands of objects including paintings and sculptures of great dimensions and weight) was evacuated to the storage rooms located in the basement. This work was carried out by a small number of museum employees.

At that time, the museum staff was more than 100 people but when the bombing started, the existing evacuation plan was implemented by a smaller number because the majority did not show up (R. Savić and M. Popović Zivancević, personal communications, 2011).

Second, by national legislation, the National Museum in Belgrade is the central museum institution, in charge of organizing the protection of all cultural heritage placed in all museums.

#### Discussion

It could be argued that this action was justified because 275 art objects, some of them masterpieces of national modern and contemporary art (Miljković 2000, 22) were saved from the destroyed building. This action was performed by a highly motivated team of museum employees, in a short period of time, under difficult circumstances. Still, it cannot be denied that this action was highly risky for the participants who could have been hurt or even killed during the rescue.

To analyze these events, one should answer three main questions.

#### 1. Why didn't they use any safety procedures or equipment?

It cannot be claimed that the National Museum had no safety equipment kits (helmets, boots, gloves, etc.) and that was why these people went into the bombed building wearing everyday clothes. Another explanation might be that they had never used safety equipment before and that they were unfamiliar with details of the emergency plan because they had not been drilled in it.

#### 2. Why did they salvage a collection that was not under the museum's jurisdiction? Were they really the only ones who could do that?

It is clear to see that the group was motivated by

the need to do something quickly under the assumption that the people responsible for it could not, or did not want to, evacuate the collection. The collection did not belong to the museum but the curators in the team strongly believed that it was their duty to act, given the lack of preventive measures from those responsible for it.

#### 3. Why were the collections not moved earlier?

It cannot be claimed that the government did not have an evacuation plan that included numerous objects of art. After all, the government employees were evacuated in time and there were no injured or dead due to the bombing of this building. An emergency plan document was an integral part of civil protection policy dating from the time of former Yugoslavia and was mandatory for all institutions. For example, the National Museum and other museums and institutions moved their entire collections to basements and storage before or at the beginning of the bombing.

If we argue that evacuation procedures and plans *did* exist in the government office and if we bear in mind that there was time to put them in action (the bombing of this building and its surroundings happened almost a month and a half after bombing began), one conclusion could be that safeguarding cultural heritage is not a priority during armed conflict. Knowing this, it is easier to understand the reaction of the museum staff since they are devoted to protection of cultural heritage, and in this case they knew where the objects were located.

#### Conclusion

This case study shows that sometimes personal motivations can have more importance, and produce more results than following official procedures. It should be kept in mind that after armed conflict, it is very difficult to understand the feelings and behavior of people who lived

or still live under constant threat. The possible tragic consequences of this action demonstrate the importance of implementation of an efficient emergency plan. Such a plan should be created as much as possible in consultation with people with experience of different emergency situations.

#### Acknowledgments

My thanks to Mr. Ranko Savić, chief of security of the National Museum, who was very generous in sharing his memory about the rescue action. He also took the photographs and kindly gave his permission to reproduce them.

#### About the author

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# The effects of conflict on the archaeological park of *Ciudad Perdida* (Lost City) in Colombia

Catalina Bateman Vargas, COLOMBIA

## Introduction

This article presents a case study focused on the effects of armed conflict on the archaeological park of *Ciudad Perdida* (Lost City), located in the north of Colombia, towards the Caribbean Sea. Due to its confluence of geographic, hydrographic and climatic factors, the area has evolved with remarkable biodiversity. The archaeological park of Ciudad Perdida is located in the Sierra Nevada of Santa Marta (a pyramid-shaped mountain and one of the highest coastal mountain ranges in the world) (Fig. 1).



Figure 1. General view, Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. All images – Credit: Catalina Bateman-Vargas.

Due to its strategic location, the area has been controlled primarily by paramilitary groups and drug traffickers who use hidden beaches in the area for smuggling. Some of the richest and most influential families in the country live

around the region. Politicians have been involved with paramilitary groups and corruption (Romero 2007).

One of the most complex sources of conflict in Colombia is land use, and in this context it is possible to find a variety of uses including mining, logging, indigenous territories and strategic military areas, among others. The various parties involved in the Colombian struggle, such as politicians, guerrillas and paramilitary groups, have fought for land control in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, leaving hundreds of dead and displaced people, as well as the environmental destruction related to drug production.

To give an idea of the dimensions of Colombia's armed conflict, this country ranks second in the world after Sudan regarding the number of internal displaced people (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2009). Human-rights activists, indigenous peoples, union leaders, farmers, journalists and civilians are continuously threatened and murdered by the armed elements.

## Site values

Ciudad Perdida's values are determined by the presence of archaeological remains that include dwellings of various sizes, terraces,

stone-lined paths and steps, ceremonial and feasting areas, canals and storehouses. Dwellings, structures, stone masonry and rammed earth terraces were built during the Tairona period (A.D. 100-1650) (Giraldo 2009). The site is representative of the Tairona culture, which has been studied for decades and poses a series of questions that have not yet been resolved by research (Figs. 2, 3).



Figure 2. General view, park of Ciudad Perdida.

The site location is also well known for its unique and diverse flora and fauna.

Because of the difficult access to the site and its location within a protected area, much of the cultural information contained in the ecological and environmental field has not been disturbed or contaminated, thus offering suitable conditions for



Figure 3. Fauna, park of Ciudad Perdida.

the development of archaeological and zooarchaeological research, among others.

The area is also home to three indigenous groups: Arhuacos, Wiwa and Kogi.

## Case study

In 2004, the government established a national army battalion (the High Mountain Battalion) within the park grounds in order to recover the Sierra Nevada territory from irregular forces. Thus, in late 2007 a company of this battalion went to Ciudad Perdida and camped on the archaeological structures for more than two years. No consideration was given to the fragility of this site, especially considering that archaeological evidence appears at less than 50 cm deep, making it highly vulnerable to damage (Fig. 4).

Anchored as an archaeological site in the tropical rainforest and three days away from the closest city, the site is not prepared to withstand a burden of this nature. Weapons, tents, boots, plus the weight of human beings generated soil displacement and erosion and movement of the structural elements of archaeological remains.



Figure 4. Presence of the national army battalion, Park of Ciudad Perdida.

An additional problem was the constant generation of food waste, cans and plastic. The 40-man company used the place as an encampment, moving flagstones from their original places, altering walls and using stones for campfires. As a consequence, some of the walls were destabilized and others collapsed.

It is important to mention that in order to get to Ciudad Perdida one has to hike about 40 kilometers, involving a rugged two- or three-day trip. There are no roads, and mules can only reach half of the way. This difficulty forces the conservation commission to make a detailed plan and order all the materials and food needed for an entire trip. The costs of the trips

increase considerably when one has to carry up equipment and heavy tools while helicopter access is forbidden. Only the army helicopter is allowed to use the central terrace to land in the park, following the national order to have a military presence in the place.

From the beginning, the park administrator and staff strongly objected to the army camp, and after several months of internal memos, conversations and complaints lodged by the Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historia (ICANH), the army finally moved into an area far away from the archaeological zone. The terraces were restored, but the army is still on site.

ICANH issued guidelines for the military (ICANH 2009) which specified appropriate behaviour for the army in the area. The protocol noted that the troops had to:

- Understand and apply the legislation on protection of cultural heritage;
- Respect and observe the recommendations of the ICANH authorities;
- Abstain from displaying weapons or other combat elements to visitors (for photo or video purposes);
- Abstain from throwing trash, extracting flora or fauna and archaeological or ethnological material, and damaging the park's archaeological and natural heritage;
- Inform their superior in rank or the park staff about any fortuitous archaeological find;
- Abstain from hunting, cutting wood and building fires;
- Separate the solid wastes and dispose of biodegradable materials in the places indicated. Take other kinds of trash (plastics, cardboard, paper, cans), down to town;
- Identify, adapt and make use of places for latrines;
- Define a place away from the archaeological structures and visitor paths to place the encampment;

- Define a secure and adequate place for cooking to avoid forest fires;
- Execute the programs of sanitation, management and preservation of ecosystems included in the armed forces' process of environmental management, designed to prevent and minimize the impact on the environment due to their institutional mission.

In 2011 the terraces were finally restored. This involved tasks such as trash collection by the park staff, in some cases with help from the troops. Still, the conservation team kept on



Figure 5. Detail of the damage caused, park of Ciudad Perdida.

finding waste such as old batteries and other materials left by the soldiers (Fig. 5).

The high degree of alteration generated by the presence of the company, plus the lack of detailed documentation about the archaeological structures, forced the conservation team to make reconstructions to guarantee the stability of the structures, although they were sadly aware of the detriment involved for the site's authenticity.

Currently the troops remain in the area and their presence in the park is still evident, although they are following some of the instructions given, such as placing the encampment outside the archeological site itself.

One clear example of the effect of the army camp on the archeological area is the use of the army helicopter. The only place suitable for helicopter landing is the central terrace. The damage it produces is due not only to the impact of weight, rotor wash and vibrations on the dwellings, but also caused by the fire the soldiers light on the flagstones in order to help the pilots land. The soldiers must also run up and down the steps to the central terrace, adding more wear on the archaeological elements. The whole event of the helicopter's landing and taking off has become part of a spectacle for visitors.

Nonetheless, the helicopter has had positive aspects such as a perception of safety on the visitors' part, support for the evacuation of injured people, or help in delivering heavy equipment and materials that are impossible to carry by other forms of transport.

Other instructions such as not showing combat weapons to visitors have not been observed. This puts people's safety at great risk and promotes a "tabloid tourism" that feeds on this type of situation to offer a more "extreme" experience.

Clearly, the geographical location of the site allows control of the territory and this is part of a military strategy. But the question remains: Why has an army defending the state and its people destroyed its own property?

A lack of communication between institutions is part of the answer to this question. The cultural sector has not convinced the military to include the importance of cultural heritage as part of their training sessions. The establishment of a protocol for the army is a step in the right direction, but the situation continues to be tense in the area. There is a clear feeling of invasion and the impression that much higher

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powers decide whether or not they will continue in the place.

The real effects of the conflict are on the people who live in these areas and who have been affected directly by the conflict through military checkpoints, theft, frightening messages and curfew hours.

The people in these areas have lived with an invisible phenomenon that permeates politics, the government and social relationships in Colombia. This phenomenon has many faces such as negligence, corruption, illicit trafficking of cultural property, fear, lack of political and economic support, lack of clear directives to listen to the real needs of the area and lack of sufficient conceptual tools and management to make effective changes. It is then understandable that people do not trust in government and, as you might expect, total apathy develops for everything communal.

Paradoxically, the local people are extremely motivated and committed to helping out with the maintenance of the park. They are very fond of their heritage, and always so friendly and helpful with each other.

#### Final considerations

This case study shows how archeological areas can be indirectly affected by armed conflict. Although the park has never been a military objective and the Colombian conflict has not had such a direct physical impact as in other areas of the country, the military presence has

still had a devastating effect on the archeological structures.

This example also shows the importance of taking action in times of peace, such as making detailed documentation of the archeological sites so it is possible to recover aspects of the affected sites when the conflict has passed.

A very good starting point is to open dialogue and discussion about the impact of conflict on heritage, and promote research aimed to obtain specific data and report abnormal situations.

#### About the author

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# Loss and recovery: The fate of the Ekpu figures and the Oron Museum during the Nigerian civil war

Linus Kasai Kingi, NIGERIA

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#### Introduction

Between 1967 and 1970, barely five years after independence from colonial Britain, Nigeria was embroiled in a political crisis that snowballed into a gruesome civil war. After about 30 months, the conflict left the country devastated and yearning for rehabilitation. Every segment of Nigerian life was affected, including the cultural sector, where both tangible and intangible resources were lost. Although the crisis involved the entire country, the impact on both infrastructure and social life varied; certain sections and segments of the country were most affected. Museums (of particular interest to the author) fell under that heading, especially those located within the theatre of battle. Such was the fate of the National Museum Oron and its priceless objects, the famous Ekpu figures.

The Oron Museum is in the southeastern geopolitical region of Nigeria. It is one of the earliest museums in that part of the country and is known for its collection of the famous wood carvings, popularly known as Ekpu ancestral figures. They were carved by the inhabitants of the area, the Oron people. Such carvings represent dead relatives who are never buried until their effigy is produced. After burial, an effigy of the deceased, usually a male, is often kept in the family ancestral shrine and constantly consulted for divine favors and guidance (Eyo 2008, 207).

Prior to the crisis, the Ekpu carvings were found in various family collections and shrines even though as claimed by the then Department of Antiquities in the *Guide to National Museum Oron*, the decline in the cult of Ekpu had left the art of making them virtually extinct (Nicklin 1977). The largest single collection of some 600 figures was held by the National Museum Oron. By the end of the civil war in 1970, those statistics were radically different.

As Oron was located on the coastline of the seceding eastern region, it automatically became vulnerable and fell prey to the various indignities that are often the outcome of every conflict.

#### The situation

The civil war that broke out in 1967 was called the “Biafran war,” so named for the Republic of Biafra, which had seceded from Nigeria. The war involved rebels led by Col. Odumegwu Ojukwu, governor of the former eastern state, who met with stiff resistance from federal troops led by the head of state, General Yakubu Gowon. The looting and massive destruction that accompanied the conflict took its toll on the important monument that was the National Museum Oron. By the time hostilities were over in January 1970, the museum was just a caricature of its former self with virtually all its collections depleted. Its major objects, the Ekpu

carvings, had been dispersed to various destinations, depriving both the Department of Antiquities (owner of the museum) and the native inhabitants of control of the finest art works that ever came from Africa.

It is also worth noting that the Ekpu figures became known to a wider audience through the activities of earlier researchers and collectors, notably K. C. Murray, the British founder of the museum movement in Nigeria. As market interest grew, it was easier for the objects to attract offers wherever they went. So while the massive destruction of the museum could be ascribed to rebel artillery, the same could not be said of the looting. Other elements appear to have exploited the situation and helped themselves to the objects, which had eager purchasers abroad. Even in 1958, just before the museum opened, a robbery occurred where over 20 Ekpu figures were stolen by a local art dealer, heralding the dispersal of the carvings to other parts of the world (Nicklin 1977).

Apart from theft, the Ekpu figures were further exposed to mutilation arising from rough handling such as dragging, piling and other abuses that left some of them damaged in various ways (Figs. 1, 2). Their exposure to inclement weather thereafter probably reduced their resistance to natural infestation, making them more difficult to preserve.

The greatest reason for hostility against the museum and its collection could be traced to



Figure 1. An Ekpu figure revealing cracks and other signs of damage, probably resulting from rough handling during the attacks. Source: (Fagg and List 1990). Copyright of National Commission for Museums and Monuments Nigeria, reproduced with permission.



Figure 2. An Ekpu figure with a significant piece missing on the peak of the cap and with a chipped chin. Source: (Eyo 1977). Copyright of National Commission for Museums and Monuments Nigeria, reproduced with permission.

the fact that the institution belonged to the federal government and must have seemed a tempting target to the rebels. In another scenario, the hardship the community was thrown into by the war could well have driven the locals to exploit the objects both in their possession and those in the museum as a means of economic survival. In any case, the cost of the devastation was borne not only by the museum and the Department of Antiquities but also by individuals whose shrines were equally looted. A seasoned journalist and commentator on museum affairs captured the

situation: “less than 10 years after it was launched in 1959, Oron Museum was destroyed during the Nigerian civil war (1967-1970). At the end of that war, the then Department of Antiquities was only able to recover a little more than a 100 of the previously over 800 Ekpu figures displayed there” (Archibong 2010, 75). Similarly, in the foreword to *Guide to the National Museum Oron*, Dr. Ekpo Eyo recalled: “The majority of the [Ekpu] carvings were ‘scattered, destroyed or stolen for sale abroad’” (Nicklin 1977, 2).

#### Evacuation of the collection

Before bombing began, occupation of the museum by troops necessitated urgent intervention. The first effort was to transfer the objects to a safer area, and the Federal Department of Antiquities reported that, “... in October 1967 the collection was evacuated to Umuahia, after the museum had been bombed and shelled. The extent of the damage was so great that subsequently, the museum had to be rebuilt...” (Nicklin 1977, 6). That first thought and effort seemed timely and was implemented, but unfortunately it turned out to be merely temporary: no sooner had they moved the collection than Umuahia also became vulnerable. With intense fighting approaching the town, the Department of Antiquities carried out another round of evacuation of some of the collection to Orlu, a nearby town.

The challenges that were faced were insurmountable. The first challenge was finding a refuge for the objects when the entire eastern region was embroiled in the crisis. The second challenge had to do with finding an environmentally suitable place for the few rescued items. In fact, apart from the looting that occurred at the vandalized museum site, even the rescued objects were pilfered during their flight to safety. During their sojourn in Umuahia, the government college where they were being

kept was made a refugee camp. The wooden carvings suddenly became a source of heat as the refugees used them as firewood; meanwhile, pilferage continued unabated. Mutilation and wear and tear was also a common feature of some of the objects, due largely to rough handling and deliberate vandalism – a fate that compounded the already great menace of looting. K. C. Murray lamented the carvings lost along the way, and noted that most of the 116 surviving ones were poor examples (Nicklin 1977, 6).

#### The aftermath

Immediately after the war, however, the process of reconstruction of both physical structure

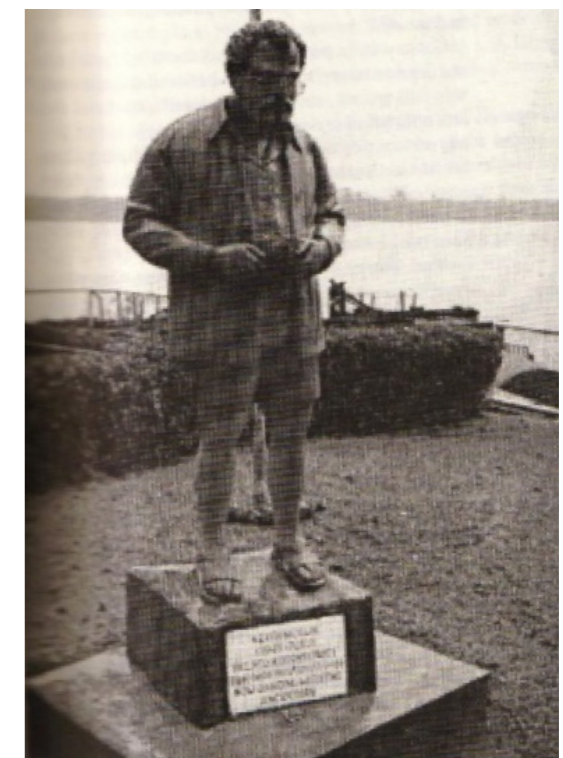


Figure 3. A statue and epitaph of Keith Nicklin, the British anthropologist honored for the prominent role he played in the restoration programme of the Oron Museum after the war. Source: (Archibong 2010) reproduced with permission.

and collections began at the site of the Oron Museum. Part of the programme involved the return of the surviving Ekpu figures, as well as products of intensive ethnographic and anthropological research covering the entire former southeastern Nigeria, now Akwa Ibom and Cross River states. By 1977, a display in the museum had been mounted with the Ekpu carvings as the centerpiece. Keith Nicklin (an ethnographer in the Department of Antiquities) was credited with having played an invaluable role in that reconstruction; his efforts were recognized and a statue stands in his honour at the present Oron Museum (Fig. 3).

#### Discussion

The rescue and reconstruction programme for the Oron Museum was not without challenges, but as insurmountable as they appeared to be, the resolve of various interest groups to see the museum rebuilt overcame them. So for a programme that began at the onset of the crisis, it could be safely said that it was a success (Fig. 4). Its first sign of success was the



Figure 4. A view of the rebuilt museum. Source: (Archibong 2010) reproduced with permission.

fact that there were people, especially officials, who were concerned enough to evacuate the objects (first to Umuahia, second to Orlu and third to Lagos). Although this option led to some unpleasant ramifications, it was still well intended. Some of the proponents of that effort were personages such as K. C. Murray and Keith Nicklin, introduced above. So the mobilization of this human resource was one of the strengths of the programme. The Department of Antiquities was also so ubiquitous in its concern for the survival of the objects and the museum's welfare that they started immediate rescue programmes at the beginning of the attacks, as well as reconstruction immediately after hostilities.

The museum's reconstruction began in 1971 and was completed in 1977, expanding it to accommodate more objects of various provenances, especially those from within the museum's catchment area: the present Cross River states and Akwa-Ibom. Alas, "the rebuilt museum has since endured further thefts, such that today while it exhibits various examples of regional art in wood, terracotta, metal, fibre, and cloth, sadly, no original Ekpu figure remains on view in the museum that was established specifically for their display" (Eyo 2008, 30).

The concept of confidence-building among the warring factions immediately after the war was incorporated in the reconstruction programme. The federal government at the time promulgated the idea of "No Winner No Vanquished," and sought to use unity museums as part of nation building. Oron Museum was part of the effort, albeit with some drawbacks. In the foreword to the *Guide*, Eyo states, "The opening of the reconstructed museum at Oron has again demonstrated the federal government's determination to preserve and present the cultural artefacts of this country for posterity ... Although the museum has become national in character, the constraint of space still limits the

inclusion of many more items from this richly endowed country" (Nicklin 1977, 2).

The other areas in which there were noticeable setbacks in the programme were in the inability of the players to foresee the vulnerability of other areas within the eastern region where the rescued objects were first taken. Furthermore, there has been not enough research – especially archaeological – in the targeted catchment area to add to the ethnographic materials currently on display. The success of the reconstruction was diminished by poor security for the objects, both in transit and in temporary storage, which facilitated theft. The security problem was so bad that none of the returned Ekpu figures, as regrettably few as they were, or any other original for that matter is on display at all.

#### Conclusion

It is recommended in view of the foregoing experiences encountered by the Oron Museum that cultural institutions develop physical resources for the accommodation of objects under threat of feuding forces by creating synergy among institutions, individuals, and governments, etc. Doing the above will make support readily available for any rescue mission. Security of cultural objects should be beefed up to make it impossible for looters to gain access every time a crisis arises.

#### About the author

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# Cultural heritage in the midst of conflict: The case of Swat Museum

Azmat Ali Khan, PAKISTAN

## Introduction

Old buildings always indicate a direction for the new ones, but some architectural heritage is kept and restored to remind us how great our civilization once was. Old buildings are very important: they give us a link between what we see today and what we were in the past. In this context, heritage buildings also give us a more exciting and a memorial feel, in contrast to the tall modern glass and steel structures around them. They also make us think and consider that old buildings are redundant and inefficient. Cultural heritage always adds a distinctive character and gives a sense of history and memory of a place, time and space.

The Swat Valley, previously known as *Udyana*, has been the place of rich culture throughout the changing perspective of its history, which is preserved in Buddhist narrative reliefs, rock-carvings and statues modeled or molded in clay or stucco or painted on wall surfaces. They exhibit an ethnic profile of the valley. Besides this, a large number of ruined sites and monuments display the art of art and architecture. It was the cradle of the great Gandhara civilization.

Historic Swat is a place with great art, culture and extraordinary natural beauty (Fig. 1). It is a magnificent valley surrounded by tall,



Figure 1. Lush green mountains of Madyan valley in Swat. All images – copyright of the author.

snow-covered mountains and dense deodar forests, with the Swat River flowing in the centre at its own rhythm. It includes Malam Jabba, the second ski resort after Gilgit, which is a beautiful area at a great height in the Karakoram mountain range. Geostrategically, this region has a key position because it shares boundaries with China, Afghanistan and Russia. The valley proudly witnessed the footprints of Alexander, Mehmood Ghaznavi and King Ashoka (Sultan-i-Rome 2009).

The advanced arts and crafts of Swat Valley are the backbone of the region's economy and a major source of livelihood. They include spinning, weaving, embroidery, lapidary, masonry, carpentry, sculpting, carving, moulding, painting, etc. They attracted pilgrims,

tourists and traders, who came here in order to quench their thirst for knowledge and recreation and promote trade and commerce.

Conservation of cultural, religious and architectural heritage sites attracts archaeologists, heritage organizations and religious scholars from around the world to visit Swat and see these legendary marvels (Swati 2011). Swat, which was the religious centre for Buddhists at one time, had some 1400 Buddhist *sangharamas* (monasteries), with some 18,000 priests in them. And it was here that a third school of Buddhism called *Vajrayana* or Tantric Buddhism developed and flourished. Due to this, it became a sacred place for Tibetans as a birthplace of *Padmasambhava* (a Sanskrit word used for Buddha).

Unfortunately, in recent years Swat has been the victim of conflict. The region is now recovering from the turbulent phase and well on the way to normality.

Life was running smoothly and development activities were in progress when two disasters brought devastation in Malakand Division in general and Swat in particular. The first disaster was man-made, a conflict that boiled over in 2007 and continued for more than three years. The second was a natural disaster: devastating floods in July 2010.

The anthropogenic conflict in the Swat valley originated in November 2007 when the Taliban challenged the Pakistan Armed Forces, causing damage to buildings and severely affecting the local population by way of suicide attacks, kidnappings and arson.

Both disasters severely damaged the rich cultural heritage and public property of Swat – once the valley of peace, a center of great learning, with a two-thousand-year-old history

and the place where the glorious civilization of Gandhara flourished.

## The situation

Let us consider the case of the Swat Museum, founded by the Wali of Swat in 1959 with his private collection. It houses the artefacts, antiquities, ornaments and other relics representing the cultural heritage of Swat Valley and Gandhara civilization. It has seven galleries, which contain an excellent collection of Gandharan sculptures taken from some of the Buddhist sites, rearranged and labeled to illustrate the Buddha's life story. Terracotta figurines and utensils, beads, precious stones, coins, weapons and various metal objects illustrate daily life in Gandhara. The ethnographic section displays the finest examples of local embroidery, carved wood and tribal jewellery (M. Munir, personal communication, 2011; Khaliq 2011).

When the Wali-e-Swat established the museum, it was intended to preserve and document the rich civilization of Swat for future generations (Fig. 2). During the 1956 mission of the Italian Institute for Africa and the Orient (IsIAO, formerly IsMEO) in the Swat valley, aimed at discovering and excavating the traces of



Figure 2. Façade of Swat Museum built in 1979.



Gandhara civilization, the Italian archaeologist Domenico Faccenna and his team discovered even more archaeological materials (Olivieri 2010).

A place was needed to house all these new finds, and for this purpose a proper museum design was drafted by the Italian architect Vittonio Cardi. All the excavated material was then added to the building in 1961 after its completion. When Pakistan came into existence, the Swat as a princely state merged into Pakistan in the 1960s. Later on, the building was taken over by the federal government and inaugurated and opened to the public in 1963. Subsequently, the Korean government funded the museum's expansion in 1967. The entire museum display was redesigned by Japanese artists in the early 1990s, and it is one of the finest of its kind in the country. Apart from the Buddhist art, the museum houses a full architectural and archaeological collection and some prehistoric remains.

The Swat Museum is the only platform for the protection and preservation of these ancient artefacts, antiquities and stupas. The museum itself is an architectural landmark, having detailed architectural features and elements.

During the ongoing military operation against the Taliban since 2007, a number of suicide attacks and bombings occurred in the surrounding areas, and as a result had badly damaged the museum building along with adjoining areas (sites called Butkhara and Barikot) where relics of Gandhara civilization such as stupas, monasteries and Buddhist arts existed. These sites were either damaged, looted or vandalized (Figs. 3-5).

During conflicts, the prime targets for destruction are museums, libraries, mosques and other public buildings. In these four years of the so-called "war on terror," 180 schools for girls



Figure 3. Butkhara, a site containing the original relics of Buddha adjacent to Swat Museum, was partially damaged by shelling during the military operation.

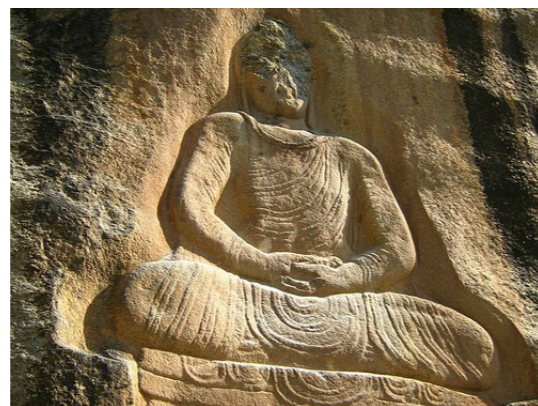


Figure 4. Buddha carving in Barikot (a small town near Mingora). The face was damaged during the military operation.



Figure 5. Intangible heritage affected during the military operations of 2007-2011: people stopped coming to the Grand Shrine in Saidu Sharif, fearing for their security.

and colleges have been blown up and attempts have been made against stupas, monasteries, the community library and the museum as well (Amnesty International 2010, 42).

One morning in February 2009, Taliban militants took control of the twin cities of Mingora and Saidu Sharif (the headquarters of Malakand Division) and tried to enter the museum to loot or destroy the antiquities and other materials. A battle began between the Pakistan army and the militants, and after several hours of combat, the army pushed them back and regained control of the twin cities and especially government buildings. The army immediately evacuated people from the area and secured their positions around the government buildings. Meanwhile, the army also evacuated objects and materials from the museum collection in a safe manner and then shifted all these precious items to the Taxila Museum in Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan.



Figure 6. Ongoing reconstruction and rehabilitation of Swat Museum by the Italian mission following the damage.

In this entire period of insurgency, the heritage remained at high risk, and became a collateral victim of the conflict by being subjected to looting or damage.

During the evacuation of Swat Museum, all the

ornaments, antiquities and statues of Buddha that were left by militants were then later taken into custody by security forces and shifted to Islamabad under the direction of the Director General of Museums.

### Reconstructing the museum

Now the challenge is how to rehabilitate or reconstruct the museum, and for this specific purpose a number of donors have so far made contact and offered their financial and technical services (Fig. 6). In this regard, the Italian ambassador visited Swat Valley and announced the opening of a cultural park and reconstruction of the Swat Museum.

Originally, the museum reconstruction was planned for 2005, but there was a major earthquake that year. The plan was also delayed due to the ongoing military operation against the militancy. Only recently did the project open again, through collaboration between IsIAO and the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Department of Archaeology and Museums, Pakistan. In 2011, the Director General of the Federal Department of Archaeology and Museums, Fazal Dad Kakar, announced to the press that the Italian government had agreed to "reconstruct Swat Buddhist Museum and establish a school of archaeology there to equip Pakistani archeologists, researchers and scholars with the latest techniques of excavation and preservation." He also stated that "the building of Swat Museum was damaged partially and showcases were damaged completely" during the attacks (Anon 2011a, 1). Luca Maria Olivieri, head of the project and co-director of IsIAO, has suggested a traditional style of architecture for the reconstruction (Khaliq 2011).

In this regard, the cultural park will be a milestone in the history of Swat and obviously the archeological sites of Butkhara and Barikot I-II will be protected there. It will promote tourism and raise public awareness about protection of

cultural heritage. Protection should be provided to all the adjoining areas where archaeological sites such as Buthkara I, II and other stupas are located. During the conflict, these were farther away from supervision and fell victim to looters and dacoits, wasting these assets.

Now things are back to normal, we are emerging from this turbulent phase, and the reconstruction and rehabilitation process has just started. The main responsibility of the higher cultural authorities and government is to pass enhanced national legislation for protection of cultural heritage according to The Hague convention and UNESCO. Such legislation needs to focus on documentation and preservation of the cultural assets of Swat and provide protection to the Gandhara civilization which is at great risk and might vanish. In particular, some concrete steps need to be taken in order to ensure the museum's protection.

As a designer, I suggest the museum be expanded in accordance with standards to ensure protection of all these cultural assets, as well as enabling public access. A mass awareness campaign regarding cultural heritage should also be promoted.

With the reconstruction and rehabilitation process ahead, so far no such concrete steps have been taken in order to ensure the safety and protection of all these cultural assets once the operation against the Taliban is accomplished.

The federal archaeology department has handed over 91 archaeological sites, the Swat Museum and the sub-regional office to the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa archaeology directorate (Anon 2011b), as part of the devolution under the 18th amendment of the 1973 constitution. Now the provincial government is the caretaker of this re-born museum and all cultural landscapes.

#### Critical evaluation

The 2005 earthquake and 2009 bombings led to cracks in the museum's ceilings, beams and load-bearing masonry walls. Later on, in June 2011, the University of Engineering and Technology (UET) Peshawar carried out a structural assessment of the building in order to evaluate its condition. The assessment concluded that the front galleries should be demolished and rebuilt. Moreover, no additional load should be added to the existing floors, and load-bearing walls, and stone masonry should be strengthened with efficient retrofitting.

It is understood that early religion and civilization were highly influenced by geographical particularities. That sustained our cultural diversity and our lifestyles that continue to reflect it in the form of our buildings.

The area where we live shapes us as we shape it physically by cultivating our cultural identity. The geography of land becomes transformed into landscape and then utilized for the organization of our culture, civilization and settlements.

Pakistan is facing the menace of ongoing conflict, which is eroding the country's social structure, economic development and political system. Repeated acts of violence are threatening Pakistan's law-and-order situation, violating

citizens' human rights, and damaging cultural heritage assets, basic infrastructure and socio-economic opportunities. This insurgency in the valley has already done great damage to cultural property, which cannot be replaced or reproduced because, as the FAC course motto went: *Culture cannot wait!*

#### About the author

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## 02 Recovery and reconstruction

# Beyond the protection of material cultural heritage in times of conflict

Marcela Jaramillo Contreras, COLOMBIA

### Introduction

Protecting cultural heritage in times of conflict should not be understood as only the protection of material cultural heritage. When wars begin, cultural heritage experts focus on protecting movable or immovable cultural property from damage. This task is obviously quite important for preserving collective identity, but is not the only one. The cultural heritage concept has expanded considerably in recent decades, and nowadays intangible cultural heritage is also considered relevant in representing a community's identity. In this sense, traditional manifestations and also historic buildings, archaeological objects and others constitute the essence of the cultural heritage, so why not also protect this new category of cultural heritage during times of conflict?

Furthermore, another aspect should be considered in relation to cultural heritage in times of conflict. Cultural heritage represents the identity of a community, and this memory comes from the past, it lives today and is transmitted to present and future generations. This means that every category of cultural heritage has something in common: there has to be an identity component that represents the culture of any community (Fig. 1). In sum, if something is considered cultural heritage it is because it meets this condition.

Nonetheless, the protection of cultural heritage has mainly been directed to the heritage object and not to the people for whom it has meaning. In other words, there are many efforts to protect the objects that have been considered cultural heritage, but there are few intentions to protect the collective memory of communities, which is apparently what makes the object of value in the first place. Often, cultural heritage is identified by taking into account only the aesthetic and technical values perceived by experts, but not the symbolic aspects that it may represent. Of course, this factor is no different in the protection of cultural heritage in times of conflict, where technical and financial efforts mainly focus on repairing or rebuilding heritage objects rather than safeguarding collective memories. Therefore, if the aim is to preserve cultural heritage in times



Figure 1. Children, community of Ciudad Bolívar, 2010.  
Credit: Marcela Jaramillo Contreras.

of conflict, it is important not only to focus in the protection of objects, but also to promote a community's ownership of their cultural heritage.

The following is a summary of one project which has been developed taking into account the aspects mentioned above. Its objective is to promote the ownership of cultural heritage (of any type) in children who have been displaced by the armed conflict in Colombia.

#### The situation

The internal Colombian armed conflict is the oldest conflict in the Americas. It has existed since approximately 1964 or 1966, involving the Colombian government, peasant guerrillas such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and recently the paramilitary. The combat among these parties has caused endless problems, such as injuries, deaths, health problems, landmines, drug trafficking and especially an internal displaced population (IDP).

In the last 25 years (1985-2010), at least 5,195,620 people have been displaced because of the armed conflict: this means that each year 208,000 people (11.42% of the total population) have had to move elsewhere because their lives, physical integrity or freedom were violated or seriously threatened (Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento - CODHES 2011). Bogotá, the capital city, has become the main destination of the internal displaced population, where 44,791 IDP arrive per year.

After Bogotá, other IDP destinations, in order, are the departments of Nariño, Antioquia and Valle del Cauca (CODHES 2008). Unfortunately, children bear the brunt of displacement: 30.1% of the total numbers of IDP who arrive in Bogotá are children (Departamento Administrativo de Planeación Distrital 2004).

Bogotá is divided into twenty administrative areas called localities; they reflect the enormous gaps between wealth and poverty, where, of course, poverty is the most constant. Unfortunately the IDPs pour into the poorest localities, ensuring that the poverty index will grow. According to the Treasury Secretary of Bogotá, the locality with the highest influx of IDP is Ciudad Bolívar; after this come Kennedy, Bosa and Usme localities, which also report the highest poverty index in the capital (Secretaría de Hacienda Distrital 2004) (Fig. 2).



Figure 2. Locality of Ciudad Bolívar in Bogotá, 2010. Credit: Andrea Jaramillo Contreras.

Ciudad Bolívar is located in the south of Bogotá, and has around 570,000 inhabitants. The population is seen as having low income and a high rate of crime and violence. The main jobs of the IDP population once they arrive there are based on operative duties such as factories and

informal jobs that will assure a minimum survival wage. Sierra Morena School takes in the largest number of IDP children, and is situated in this locality. The students here, who come from different regions, have many psychological, physical, economic, social and cultural problems. In relation to culture, the most important problem is forgetting their cultural heritage. This factor gives the children enormous problems with their identity. They cannot live in their own regions, but neither do they feel that they belong to the new context. For this reason, many of them decide to return to their region where they become combatants in the war, or join urban gangs.

It is important to stress that heritage recognition may contribute towards the improvement of children's and families' living conditions and above all may generate scenarios of tolerance and peaceful coexistence. The symbols that represent their territory have become crucial in order to enhance the sense of belonging and to mitigate the negative impact of the country's internal conflict. In this sense, heritage recognition constitutes a priority and a vehicle towards peace. As Shaheed (2010, 3) explains, "In many aspects, cultural rights are pivotal to the recognition and respect of individual and collective — and encompass important freedoms relating to matters of identity. (...) In addition, cultural rights are essential tools for development, peace and the eradication of poverty, and for building social cohesion, as well as mutual respect and understanding between individuals and groups, in all their diversity."

#### Case study

The project, called "Recognizing our cultural identity in classrooms" will enable vulnerable student victims of armed conflict in the recognition, value and enjoyment of their cultural identity. This project is composed of three phases.

The first is the development of a pedagogical tool for teachers in classrooms, the second is related to teacher training in public schools in four localities of Bogotá, and the third is to train public school teachers in seven other regions of Colombia. The explanation below is related to phase one which has already been concluded.

**Objective:** Develop a pedagogical methodology to teach cultural heritage in classrooms with vulnerable students affected by internal conflict and with teachers of social studies in primary grades from Sierra Morena Educational Institution.

**Focus Group:** Develop nine workshops with a focus group of twelve local and non-local students who arrived from different regions of Colombia, victims of internal conflict, between ages eight to twelve, and teachers of social sciences of the school of Sierra Morena in the locality of Ciudad Bolívar (Fig. 3).



Figure 3. Discussions about their own history, 2010. Credit: Andrea Jaramillo Contreras.

**Methodology:** After carrying out the workshops with students, the strategy was to identify the best methodological approach to promote students' critical thinking on cultural heritage. Collective work using social cartography was so identified.

This methodology proved to be a vehicle to proper understanding of territory through life experiences and day-to-day situations. This type of cartography is based upon a participatory approach that implies respect for opinions and beliefs and a tool to promote social transformation through a community-based approach. The most convenient tool for social cartography is collective mapping. This process promotes interaction between the participants and may highlight different cultural backgrounds, until obtaining a common and collective image of the territory, memory and community. The process involves debates, discussions, ability to listen, conciliation processes, and – most important – finding opportunities in the context.

In this sense, bearing in mind the importance that memory plays in a context such as Sierra Morena, mapping out the territory collectively in three different stages promoted identification of and respect for cultural identity, providing the tools necessary to understanding their present and culture as a result of the confluence of diversity, and to visualize or imagine the future (Fig. 4).

### Stage 1: Mapping my past:

*Group:* Children from grades four and five, parents and relatives

*Aim:* to release cognitive information about the territory and regions where children used to live by mapping their house, neighborhood, city, local landmarks, events associated with traditional practices, and places of recreation. These elements strictly related to the identity of children when given shape in a map, and involve an exercise of memory which brings to the present what they would like to protect and safeguard.



Figure 4. Work in progress, 2011. Credit: Juan Camilo Gaviria.

### Stage 2: Mapping our present: community participative approach

*Group:* Children from grades four and five of primary school

*Aim:* to identify the elements that today enhance the sense of belonging of the children in their territory which will highlight the child-environment relationship. The collective construction of this map will identify symbolic, representative spaces and manifestations that may constitute scenarios of tolerance and respect. By a spontaneous walk through the immediate context of the school, the students can experiment and identify, by using the notions in stage 1, their tangible and intangible heritage (Fig. 5).



Figure 5. Social Cartography, 2011. Credit: Juan Camilo Gaviria.

### Stage 3: Mapping my future: Sierra Morena 50 years later

*Group:* children from grades four and five of primary school

*Aim:* When imagining our context in the future we are exercising our memory by taking elements from the past and present into a future in an imagined context. The choice of these elements affirms the existing children's attachment to a place and their will to keep them alive. It is important through this stage also to identify the new elements the children imagine their territory will have, as a way to project a clear notion of sense of belonging.

### Critical evaluation and conclusion

In conclusion, it should be noted that this local project is a clear example of how to include the subjects (communities) and also tangible and intangible heritage in the protection of cultural heritage in time of conflict. In this case, the subjects are child victims of armed conflict who take ownership of their cultural heritage in order to strengthen their identity roots. As mentioned above, protection of the cultural heritage in times of conflict cannot be only for objects, it is also so important to fortify the memories of the communities. In addition, through the cartography, the children can map not just the tangible heritage, but also the intangible. In this regard it is considered important to point out two aspects, one international and other national (Fig. 6).



Figure 6. Young girl, 2010. Credit: Marcela Jaramillo Contreras.

The concept of war in the world has changed, especially since the end of the Cold War with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Today, most of the wars are internal and not between countries. Moreover, such conflicts arise mainly in poor countries rather than developed ones. In addition, if wars are mainly internal and they focus on poor countries, it is evident that in these situations, cultural heritage is not monumental, as it is in the northern countries. On the contrary, these countries have a wonderful and vast intangible cultural heritage that the richest countries do not have. In consequence, it is essential to adapt or reformulate the key international agreement, the 1954 *Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict*, which currently focuses uniquely on cultural “property,” in other words, movable or immovable property, or the buildings or centres in which it is housed for conservation (UNESCO 1954a, ch. 1, art. 1, 1954b, 1999). The convention should also support underdeveloped countries in protecting not only their tangible cultural heritage, but also in safeguarding intangible heritage. Furthermore, this international agreement should not only be applicable during the conflict, but also in periods in between hostilities.

The other aspect is related to the new *Law of victims* in Colombia (called Ley 1448). According to this law, everyone who was a victim of the internal war must be compensated with two important components: symbolic and economic reparation (Republica de Colombia 2011). Symbolic reparation relates to the historical memory of the event that occurred, and also stresses the government's intention to try to foster the memory of communities as they were before the conflict. Unfortunately, this law has not yet focused on repairing the cultural heritage (of any type) of the victims, which would represent the memories that communities have of their tangible and intangible cultural heritage. These

represent their cultural identity and, of course, their cultural right.

#### About the author

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## Reorganizing storage in the National Museum of Afghanistan

Mohammad Fahim Rahimi, AFGHANISTAN

#### Introduction

This case study focuses on the National Museum of Afghanistan, a museum that was destroyed and badly looted during the civil war. The work described below was a salvage operation aimed at making improvements within one storage area to make the objects accessible and in better conservation conditions. I was selected to work on this project by my museum because I had just returned from the ICCROM FAC 10 course and was expected to apply what I'd learned there. The task proved to be a significant personal challenge.

The museum's misery started after 1992, when military groups took control of the city of Kabul and started fighting each other. During that time, whenever the museum was taken over by a different military group it was looted, and in total 70% of the artefacts were lost (O.K. Massoudi, personal communication, 2011). In 1993, the museum building caught fire from shelling, and all its contents and equipment burned, including beautiful fresco paintings from the archaeological site of Dilberjin that had decorated the walls of a gallery.

In 1994, with financial support from the United Nations, a salvage operation began at the museum, and the building was somewhat strengthened. Meanwhile, objects were being collected from the rubble. A small collection of objects

registered in 3,439 inventory sheets were found and put into storage. In 1996, they were transported to the Kabul Hotel, about 10 km north of the museum. After that, they went to the Ministry of Information and Culture building in the city centre.

The inventory process continued after 1996 until 2001 when more than 2,500 pieces were destroyed by Taliban insurgents, marking another tragic chapter in the history of the museum (O.K. Massoudi, personal communication, 2011).

In 2002, reconstruction of the museum building began, and the inventory of artefacts continued at the same time. At that time, the artefacts that had been previously evacuated were transported back to the museum and stored in the building's depot.

The museum, which was officially reopened in 2004, had a great deal of work ahead and required a major effort from its staff. It started functioning, and works slowly began on different aspects of the museum.

One of the tasks facing the museum staff was reorganizing the storage, as mentioned above. Some of the artefacts that had been evacuated were brought back to the museum and put in storage. Other artefacts that had been

confiscated by security forces, returned from foreign countries or excavated by archaeologists after 2002 were also stored in the museum building, which had no kind of equipment.

Two museum conservators and I were asked by the director to organize one of the storage areas, which we call the basement depot. We started work in December 2010 and finished in January 2011.

#### The situation

The museum had followed an old “key-holder” system – a system in Afghani museums whereby a person is legally responsible for taking care of the artefacts submitted to him or her. The key holder is responsible for objects kept in storage and also controls the storage key. When the museum acquires artefacts, it first goes through the accession process, after which the key holder officially signs for them and takes them in charge.

We, the museum professionals, can only access the storage in the key-holder’s presence, along with three other people, always selected from different departments. Obviously, you will not have a very free hand to work with objects under such circumstances.

Moreover, in our museum, the stores are not readily accessible. The museology department always manages entry to storage areas in coordination with the museum director. So, when we worked in the depot there was one person from the museology department, the key holder, one conservator, and me. To complicate the situation further, there was a lack of equipment, such as shelves, good crates, acid-free papers and chemicals.

As is the case in many museums worldwide (ICCROM and UNESCO 2011), in the basement

depot where we worked, the objects were mostly on the ground, covered in dust. There were also some wooden boxes, which contained objects packed in straw (Figs. 1-3). Being in the basement, the depot was damp, and we found mould growing on the surfaces of some of the packed ceramic objects. There were different types of objects there because the person responsible (key holder) had various items in his charge. The objects in boxes were also wrapped in different materials.

There was a lot of waste material in the storeroom, which we removed. Many of the objects were also very heavy and difficult to move without lifting equipment. All we could do was clean those objects and push them into place.

#### The project

The first time I entered the storage, it looked like an incredibly daunting task, but we did our best.



Figure 1. Artefacts in wooden boxes, one above other (before cleaning and reorganization). All images – Credit: Mohammad Fahim Rahimi. Copyright of National Museum of Afghanistan, reproduced with permission



Figure 2. Clay and ceramic objects in wooden and cardboard boxes on the ground (before cleaning and reorganization).



Figure 3: Artefacts placed in wooden boxes (before cleaning and wrapping in soft tissue).

The main challenges were lack of appropriate museum systems, including insufficient space, inadequate supplies (safe wrapping materials, certain chemicals used for restoration, museum-grade boxes and containers, as well as mechanical lifting equipment), not to mention poor lighting and ventilation. What we could do was very simply a kind of first aid for preventing damage to objects by examining the pieces and making sure that they were not in danger.

From wood available on site, we had the museum carpenter build two sets of shelves (not enough, by any means), and then we moved the smaller objects to them from the floor and boxes.

Before shelving, the first step was to examine the objects and, after cleaning away surface dust, we wrapped them in paper and put them in plastic bags and then into metal boxes (Figs. 4, 5). After examination, if any objects were found to be in danger they were put aside and transferred to the restoration department for further treatment.

Admittedly, this approach was not perfect, but it was all that could be done under the circumstances.



Figure 4: Artefacts on wooden shelves (after cleaning, removal from the ground and protection from dust with plastic sheeting).



Figure 5: Artefacts in metal boxes (after cleaning, removal from the ground and protection from dust with plastic sheeting).

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The museum has now agreed to change the key-holder system because most often key holders have not been trained to handle conservation and monitoring of objects. From now on, there will be a curator system, where the curator will be responsible for collections. The curators who have been selected for the museum are archaeologists and have taken courses abroad many times. They, like me, have attended ICCROM or other institutions for training.

#### Conclusion

One hopes this new system will become useful for our museum and be a good step toward better preservation of the cultural heritage of Afghanistan. Conservation conditions should improve as soon as we have the new system and start to document the objects properly again, treat all the pieces and hand them over to curators to be appropriately cared for. As our collection was not in one place when we started this system, we will have to divide the collection into different storerooms.

This work was viewed positively from the museum's perspective. In my opinion it was a great success because we at least rescued the objects that were in danger from ground contact, dust, insects and humidity, and of course from accidental damage. Still, there is a lot to do for the objects and storage, not only in the basement depot but also in other museum storage areas. We need basic change for our stores and exhibition rooms, and enough space to properly partition and house our objects. User-friendly tools such as RE-ORG (<http://www.re-org.info>), developed by ICCROM and UNESCO, will be examined for future projects.

Definitely when we have better equipment and facilities, as mentioned above, we will be able to do more. There are many future opportunities for improvement, and I hope to continue applying

the knowledge I have acquired. I would like to make all storerooms standard and appropriate to the objects – better than what we were able to accomplish in the basement depot. Despite present and future personal challenges, I hope to help achieve the situation our museum needs.

#### About the author

Mohammad Fahim Rahimi is Curator at the National Museum of Afghanistan in Kabul. He frequently accompanies traveling exhibitions abroad and has curated many famous exhibitions for the National Museum of Afghanistan. He has been involved in projects aiming to rehabilitate archaeological storage areas within the museum. He is a former participant of FAC 10. Contact: [mohdfahim\\_rahimi@yahoo.com](mailto:mohdfahim_rahimi@yahoo.com)



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# The alteration of history: The case of the restoration of the 11th-century church of St. George in Ilori in Abkhazia, Georgia

Maka Dvalishvili, GEORGIA

#### Historical Background

This case study focuses on the 11th-century church of St. George, located in Ilori, in Georgia's occupied region of Abkhazia. Owing to current political circumstances described below, this Georgian cultural heritage site has been subjected to intervention, which has resulted in the drastic alteration of the structure, changing its original appearance and obscuring its Georgian origins.

Georgia is a small country (ca. 69,700 km<sup>2</sup> in extent, with a population of ca. 4.5 million), located to the south of the Greater Caucasus Range. It is bordered by the Black Sea to the west, the Russian Federation (north), Turkey (southwest), and Armenia and Azerbaijan (southeast). Georgia's material evidence and rich heritage reflect the nation's long history and strong cultural identity from the prehistoric era to the present.

Abkhazia, the northwestern region of Georgia, stretched from the southern slopes of the Caucasian Ridge to the Gumista River, and throughout the centuries has been among the historical provinces of Georgia. Being part of the western Georgian state of Colchis (repeatedly mentioned in ancient Greek sources) from the late 2nd millennium to the 1st millennium B.C., a dependent of kingdom of Lazika (Egrisi) in the 1st to 7th centuries

A.D., and strengthened and transformed into the Abkhazeti kingdom in the 8th to 10th centuries, this particular region played an important role in the unification of Georgia during the transition from the 10th to the 11th century. As part of united Georgia until the 15th century, Abkhazia was one of its most active regions, where Georgian culture flourished: architecture, mural painting, *repoussé* work and manuscript illumination. After the disintegration of united Georgia in the 15th century, Abkhazia became a part of the kingdom of Imereti and the principality of Odishi until its incorporation into the Russian Empire in 1810 (Muskhelishvili *et al.* 2008; Otxmezuri 2009). During the Soviet period, Abkhazia was an autonomous republic within Georgia. Then in 1992, an armed confrontation supported by the military forces of the Russian Federation broke out.

As a result, more than 15,000 ethnic Georgians were killed and up to 250,000 remain displaced from their homeland. The ethnic cleansing of Georgians has been recognized officially by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) during their summits in Lisbon (1996, art. 20), Budapest (1994, dec. 2) and Istanbul (1999, art. 17); it has also been referenced in a resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly (2008) and in a resolution of the UN Security Council (1993). At present, the



territory is under occupation (European Parliament 2011) and is governed by a proxy regime completely out of the control of Georgian authorities. The access for international organizations is limited.

### The situation

As a continuation of the policy of ethnic cleansing, the cultural heritage of the territory of Abkhazia became a subject for stylistic falsifications aiming to obliterate all cultural associations with Georgian history and cultural identity. The restoration of the church of St. George in Ilori serves as a case in point.

The church is located in Ilori village, in the Ochamchire district. It was a hall-type vaulted structure built of hewn stone, with annexes on the north, south and west (Didebulidze 2009; Katsia 1963; Muskhelishvili *et al.* 2008; Tumanishvili 1999). Ornamental details and figural reliefs adorned the church's façades. The hewn masonry revealed in the wall structure, as well as the carved stone ornamentation and reliefs on the exterior, are typical of Georgian medieval architecture. The church's refined proportions and the quality of execution reflect characteristics of Georgian architecture, which reached its finest development in the 11th to 12th centuries. Five Georgian lapidary



Figure 1. Asomtavruli Inscription of George Kocholala, 11th C. the Church of St. George in Ilori, East façade. Copyright of Ministry of Culture and Monuments Protection of Georgia, reproduced with permission.

inscriptions on the church's façades bear the names of the structure's donors and builders (Akhaldze 2005) (Fig. 1). In the 17th century, Levan Dadiani II, ruler of Odishi, (Mingrelia) Western Georgia, renovated the building. In 1736, it was burned by the Ottoman Turks during their invasion of the region, and as a result the ancient murals in the interior were completely destroyed. In the 19th century (1840s), after the Russians incorporated the kingdom of Imereti into the Russian Empire, the church (like many other monuments throughout Georgia) was whitewashed and a tiny domelike structure added to the roof of the central space. The present paintings in the interior belong to the 1950s.

During its history, the church functioned as one of the most active ecclesiastic centres of western Georgia. The 16th-century *repoussé* icon of St. George and the 19th-century silver chalice, both with Georgian-language donor inscriptions, found in the church demonstrate the veneration of the site over the centuries. Ilori was subordinated to the Patriarchate of Georgia. However, the Abkhazian Church, the autocephaly of which had never existed at any previous time, recently declared its independence and therefore the Ilori church came under local religious authorities.

### The intervention on the church of St. George

The situation was described as follows: "Illegal agreements, such as the one dated October 16, 2010, signed between the so-called Ministry of Culture of the "Republic of Abkhazia" and the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, in the field of preservation, examination, popularization and state protection of historical and cultural monuments ..." (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia 2010). The Georgian Patriarchate reportedly addressed a letter to the Russian Patriarchate requesting the involvement of Georgian and international

professionals in the restoration. This request, however, was not fulfilled to the satisfaction of the Georgian Patriarchate, leading to radical changes in the building's appearance.

"On the edge of the sea ... there is the church of St. George in Ilori ... *domeless* [author's emphasis], small, rich and adorned" (Batonishvili 1973, 779) – this is how the 18th-century *Georgian Chronicles* describes the monument. After the recent intervention, however, it is really difficult to recognize the church's original appearance. The works provided in 2010 chose an active and deliberate approach, rather than a conservation/preservation approach incorporating a reversibility principle. Comparison of the present situation with earlier photographs shows the drastic changes made to the structure



Figure 2. Church of St. George in Ilori, Abkhazia, Georgia, 10-11th C. Northwest façade before intervention. Copyright of Ministry of Culture and Monuments Protection of Georgia, reproduced with permission.

and general appearance of the 11th-century building.

The original hall-type church, to which the domelike structure was added in the 19th century (Fig. 2), was further redeveloped in 2010: the tiny 19th-century dome with its cross has been replaced by a slightly bigger blind drum covered with a gold-plated metal roof (Fig. 3); this is completely alien to Georgian architecture but is typical of Russian churches. The main body and the belfry of the church



Figure 3. Church of St. George in Ilori, Abkhazia, Georgia, 10-11th C. Northwest façade after intervention, 2010. Copyright of George Chubinashvili National Research Center for Georgian Art History and Heritage Preservation, reproduced with permission.



Figure 4. Church of St. George in Ilori, Abkhazia, Georgia; 10-11th C. Whitewashed Northeast façade. Copyright of George Chubinashvili National Research Center for Georgian Art History and Heritage Preservation, reproduced with permission.

have been plastered and whitewashed – in keeping with the Russians' 19th-century treatment of the church's exterior (Fig. 4). Moreover, this time the whitewash was further decorated with a reddish-purple color applied on some architectural details, such as the blind arcade running around the façades. This new

feature completely changes the authentic appearance of the building. Furthermore, the plaster and whitewash were applied over the historical Georgian inscriptions on the building's façades. As a result, the inscriptions have become illegible for visitors. The fact that some parts of the original decorations were left uncovered, among these the window frames with stone-carved ornamental décor and the relief of St. George, speaks to the intentional selection of the areas to be plastered and colored by the restorers (Fig. 5). This in itself is an important fact, as it shows the deliberate



Figure 2. Church of St. George in Ilori, Abkhazia, Georgia, 10-11th C. Northwest façade before intervention. Copyright of Ministry of Culture and Monuments Protection of Georgia, reproduced with permission.

alteration of original architectural forms and obfuscation of inscriptions, resulting in the falsification of cultural associations, identity and history.

As a response to the abovementioned act, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia (2010) published an official statement, in which the restoration of the church of St. George at Ilori was described as “[an act] of vandalism towards Georgian cultural and religious monuments in the occupied territories of Abkhazia...” The statement continues:

It should be noted that with these acts Russia is violating the international law, including the obligations assumed under the International Humanitarian Law, particularly, under

the *Convention on the Protection of Cultural Heritage in the Event of Armed Conflict, Hague, 1954*, which condemns the state parties for damaging and destroying historic and cultural heritage while in case of occupation obliges State Parties to the Convention to take all appropriate measures to conduct their activities in such a manner as to protect cultural heritage.

The Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia (2010) and cultural NGOs (Sharia 2011) addressed a number of international organizations with an official letter regarding the restoration work carried out on the church of St. George in Ilori. The Government of Georgia sent letters to all international agencies dealing with the conservation of cultural heritage to apprise them of the “intentional” destruction in the uncontrolled region of Georgia. Additionally, a public awareness and media campaign was launched in Georgia.

The Georgians are still awaiting these grievances to be redressed. Furthermore, according to the State Information Agency of the proxy régime in Abkhazia, there are plans to announce a tender for restoration work aimed at other Orthodox churches in the territory of Abkhazia (for example, the 9th- to 10th-century New Athos Monastery): “Plans are being made to coordinate the activities of the Russian funds, public sector and individuals who might be involved in such activities” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia 2010).

#### Conclusion

Among the underlying causes that resulted in the severe alteration of the church's original features one can list:

- Limited access for Georgian and international professionals to the cultural heritage on the territory of Abkhazia, Georgia;

- Lack of knowledge and awareness among the general population of the value of common cultural heritage, which often leads to inappropriate use of cultural heritage for political purposes;
- Lack of events that might enhance the dialogue between cultural professionals on both sides (conferences, meetings, blogs, others);
- Insufficient involvement and deficiency in monitoring missions by international conservation professionals.

Given the existing situation, particularly due to the limited access of Georgian professionals, the active involvement of international conservation experts and an awareness-raising campaign at the international level acquire the utmost importance.

The particular case of the church of St. George in Ilori can serve as an example of a politically biased restoration approach as a continuation of an ethnic cleansing policy that leads to the loss of authenticity of cultural heritage sites in conflict areas. A statement by Johnson (2008, 13) in a Council of Europe report, which discusses the broader targeting of built heritage as a cultural symbol, could perhaps explain why the church of St. George was altered through the restoration process:

The systematic destruction of goods and community symbols as built heritage constitutes, in all armed conflict, an indicator of a possible ethnic cleansing objective. The aim of those who perpetrate the destruction is to prevent the local population from coming back or to neutralise their sense of initiative leading to the impoverishment of their living conditions with the idea that sooner or later they will leave the area.

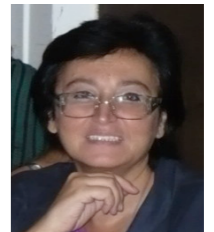
Finding ways of effective communication among cultural heritage professionals – scholars and restorers – on the conflicting sides can be seen as the way to protect cultural heritage in peril.

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# The impact of conflict on cultural heritage in Kosovo

Gjejlane Hoxha, KOSOVO

## Background

The “Republic of Kosovo” (see Note) is situated in the heart of the Balkans, bordered by Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. It covers an area of about 10,000 km<sup>2</sup>, and is populated by more than two million people (1998 estimates): 90% Albanians and 10% Serbs, Turks, Bosniaks and other ethnic groups. Albanian and Serbian are the two key languages. The majority of the population is either Islamic or Catholic; the Serb community is Orthodox. The capital is Pristine.

The territory possesses a multicultural historic environment, with evidence of settlement since long before it became successively part of the Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman Empires (Shukriu 2004) (Fig. 1).

In the early 20th century it was under the dominion of the kingdom of Serbia, Slovenia and Croatia. After the Second World War, Kosovo became a province in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy from 1974 to 1989. The Yugoslav Republic began to break up during the early 1990s with Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia breaking away from the state; Kosovo then became part of Serbia.



Figure 1. Anthropomorphic figures. Copyright of Ministry of Culture Youth and Sports, reproduced with permission. All images – credit of the author.

## The conflict and its aftermath

From spring of 1998 until the summer of 1999, Kosovo was exposed to dramatic armed conflict and ethnic cleansing. About a million Kosovo Albanians were driven from their homes and thousands were killed (Independent International Commission on Kosovo 2000). Their houses and traditional cultural heritage monuments and sites were looted and destroyed (Riedlmayer 2000a,b; Frederiksen and Bakken 2000).

NATO bombing began in March 1999, and in June 1999, the Serbian forces capitulated. Kosovo then became a UN protectorate (UNMIK) (United Nations Security Council 1999). Beginning in April 2001, a Constitutional Framework defined the authority of the Provisional Institutions of Self Government (PISG), even though UNMIK retained key powers.

The Kosovo Status negotiations process for independence began in 2005. In 2007, the UN Special Envoy, Martti Ahtisaari, drew up a Comprehensive proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement. The proposal included issues important to Kosovo's long-term stability: economic factors, property rights, protection of cultural and religious heritage and institutional guarantees for the rights of Kosovo's minorities, especially Kosovo Serbs. The proposal was accepted by local Kosovo authorities, and supported by the United States of America and many European countries. It was strongly opposed by Serbia and Russia (United Nations Security Council 2007).

On 17 February 2008, the Assembly of Kosovo declared independence from Serbia. The exercise of Kosovo's independence and its fulfillment of the obligations set forth in the Settlement proposal were supervised and supported for an initial period by international civilian and military presences. The religious and cultural heritage of minorities was guaranteed protection (United Nations Security Council 2007, Annexes V, XII).

#### Kosovo's cultural heritage

Less well known than the human tragedy is the fate of Kosovo's rich cultural heritage, its traditional buildings and religious monuments, as well as archaeological sites, Catholic and Orthodox churches and monasteries, Islamic mosques and dervish lodges (*teqes*), traditional residential architecture, well-

preserved historic urban centers, libraries, archives, museums and other cultural and educational institutions (Government of Kosovo 2011).

Today, Kosovo's cultural heritage consists of a variety of properties within a range of built settings. It includes architectural and archaeological heritage, together with natural elements; important monuments, groups of buildings and historic areas (the man-made environment as whole), and intangible heritage as well (Ministry of Culture Youth and Sports 2010).

Located at the crossroads of cultures, civilizations and trade routes, throughout its history Kosovo has been inhabited by its native people Illyrians (ancestors of today's Albanians) and various ethnic and religious groups (Shukriu 2004). Until the mid-20th century, Kosovo's cultural heritage symbolized peaceful coexistence (Fig. 2). The different ethnic and religious groups preserved the artistic, aesthetic and social values and traditions of this rich and multicultural



Figure 2. Historic Centre of Prizren. Photos shown at the "Exhibition on the architectural and urban heritage of Prizren," Prizren, November 2000. Copyright of Council of Europe and the Institute for Protection of Monuments, reproduced with permission.

heritage over generations as part of their deeply rooted lifestyles.

Conflicts, however, have also been part of Kosovo's history, and in 1998/99, local Albanian cultural heritage was targeted, looted and destroyed by Serbian forces. The large-scale destruction, in both urban and rural areas, resulted in loss or damage to thousands of cultural heritage monuments and sites, among



Figure 3. Old Bazaar in Peja, Kosovo after the hostilities in July 1999. Photos shown at the "Exhibition on the destruction of the cultural monuments and sites," Pristine, November 1999. Copyright of Kosovo Institute for Protection of Monuments, reproduced with permission.

them more than 200 mosques, a dozen Catholic churches, and hundreds of others (Kosovo Institute for the Protection of Monuments 2007) (Fig. 3).

The 1998/99 conflict affected not only the built heritage, but also Kosovo's museum collections and archives. On the eve of hostilities in late 1998, more than 1200 of the most valuable items from the collections of the National Museum of Kosovo in Pristine and from regional museums in Prizren and Mitrovica were taken to Belgrade on the pretext of an exhibition at

the National Museum from 1998 to 1999. The international community, specifically UNMIK, supports the moral and legal right of Kosovo institutions concerning the return of archaeological and ethnological objects. In this context, Kosovo Special Representative of the Secretary-General Mr. Michael Steiner made a first step in

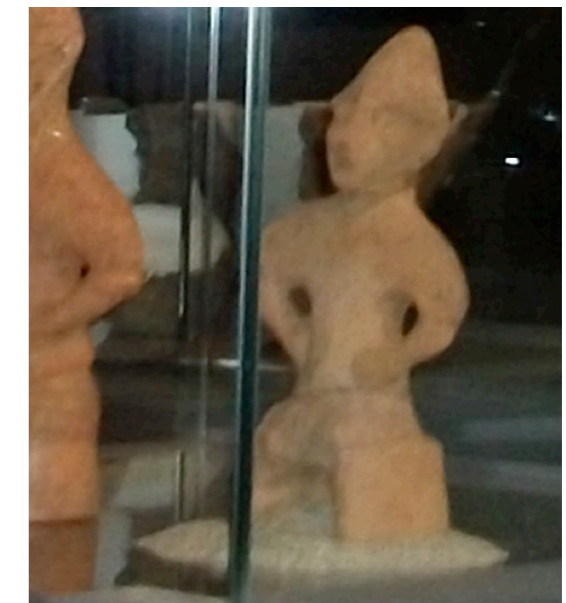


Figure 4. "The Goddess on her throne." Photo taken in the exhibition room of the Kosovo Museum in Pristine, September 2011. Copyright of the author.

May 2002, securing the return of "The Goddess on her throne," Kosovo's Neolithic masterpiece (Fig. 4). More than a dozen years later and after numerous requests for the return of the collections, many are still missing. Serbians strongly contest their ownership. To raise awareness on the many missing museum collections, an informative brochure was created (Fig. 5).

The entire documentation of the country's monuments and sites from the central archive of the Kosovo Institute of Monuments was also removed to Serbia in June 1999 (Kosovo Institute

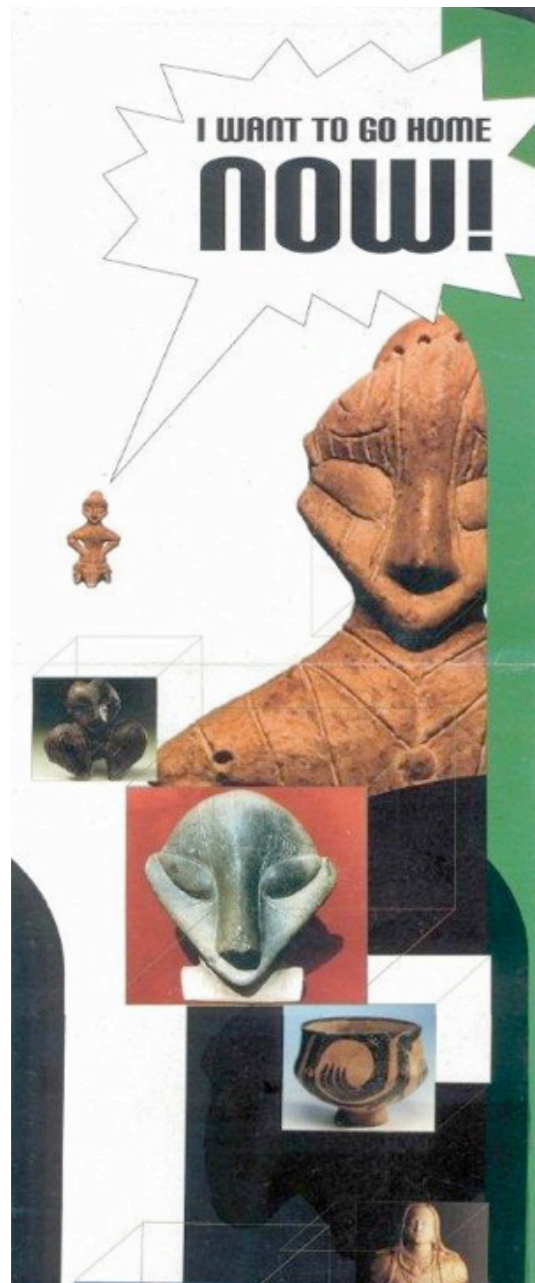


Figure 5. Campaign for the return of the Kosovo archaeological and ethnological collection. Copyright of Ministry of Culture Youth and Sports, reproduced with permission.

for the Protection of Monuments 1999). Thus the cultural heritage institutions in Kosovo were deprived of their institutional memory. Figure 6 shows the condition of the central archive around this time.

Regrettably, damage and destruction of cultural heritage sites did not end when the conflict ended in June 1999. During an outbreak of ethnic riots in March 2004, additional cultural heritage was damaged: 34 cultural and religious sites (Orthodox churches, monasteries, cemeteries, funerary chapels, and traditional houses) were attacked (Council of Europe 2004).

#### The main challenges, approaches and interventions

Generally speaking, Kosovo's cultural heritage is in a highly precarious and vulnerable situation arising from the natural processes of age and decay, greatly exacerbated by environmental pollution, war damage, significant long-term neglect and a chronic lack of policy, strategies and funds for protection and preservation (Kosova Council for Cultural Heritage 2010a). There is also the inevitable damage to buildings through inappropriate adaptation and new development.

This priceless heritage is still endangered by a variety of factors: a limited understanding of the value of cultural heritage; a shortage of experience in heritage management and planning; the prevalence of illegal construction and the inability of the authorities to enforce regulations to protect historic monuments and sites; lack of proper inventory and information systems; and lack of public awareness and education (Kosova Council for Cultural Heritage 2010a).

In the post-war reconstruction period, assessment and consolidation of cultural heritage have been considered. A number of projects have

been supported by national and international organizations, but they have barely scratched the surface, given the extent of outstanding needs. Of the thousands of monuments and sites in Kosovo that were destroyed or damaged during the armed conflict, only a handful have been professionally restored or reconstructed (Kosovo Institute for Protection of Monuments 2007).

Vast numbers of national and international reports and guidelines have been generated by UNESCO, the Council of Europe, Cultural Heritage without Borders, the Kosovo Ministry of Culture Youth and Sports, and others. Destruction of cultural heritage in Kosovo has been classified as a crime against humanity, as shown by the verdict in the cases of Slobodan Milošević and General Vlastimir Dordević (United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia 2011).

Since the events of March 2004, the protection of cultural heritage has assumed a high profile on the political national and international agenda, with much attention paid to the protection of Serbian Orthodox churches. Damaged Orthodox monasteries and churches have been repaired or reconstructed by the Kosovo Government with international support (Reconstruction Implementation Commission 2007). The other parts of Kosovo's heritage remain neglected, in danger and in an alarming state of decay (Kosovo Institute for the Protection of Monuments 2007).

More than a decade after the armed conflict, a large number of cultural heritage monuments and sites in urban and rural areas, including historic mosques and traditional residential architecture, remain beyond adequate care, technical assessment, or restoration (Kosovo Institute for Protection of Monuments 2007). Historic centres and archaeological sites are

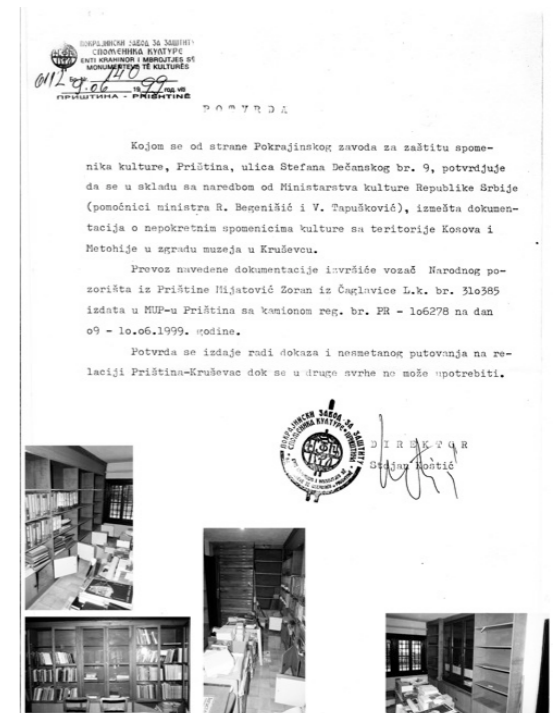


Figure 6. Document signed by Serbian authorities ordering the transfer of the documentation on Kosovo's monuments and sites to Serbia in June 1999, and images of the empty archive of the Kosovo Institute for Protection of Monuments in Pristina. Photos shown at the "Exhibition on the destruction of the cultural monuments and sites," Pristina, November 1999. Copyright of Kosovo Institute for Protection of Monuments, reproduced with permission.

left to the mercy of time and the destructive interventions of developers (Kosova Council for Cultural Heritage 2010a). The collections and documentation taken by Serbia in 1998 have yet to be returned (Government of Kosovo 2011).

Public and professional access to places such as monasteries and Orthodox churches in Kosovo is restricted; even cultural heritage authorities and institutions are not allowed access (Government of Kosovo 2011). This happens to be the case, for example, of some mosaics that were removed before the conflict in 1999.

Ongoing conservation activities proceed without well-developed strategy or coordinated policy. Current imperatives are: completion of the legal List of Cultural Heritage; a set of professional guidelines for conservation; inclusion of cultural heritage in territorial planning; and consolidation of funds (Kosova Council for Cultural Heritage 2010b).

#### Successes and needs

Despite the difficulties, at some levels there are signs of improvement.

Over the last few years, with the participation of international bodies, it has become evident that the Balkans as a whole, as well as Kosovo in particular, have experienced a fundamental political transformation, bringing new dimensions and principles into society. The preservation of cultural heritage assets, with a view to improving the quality of life and living environment for local communities, is beginning to be recognized as a valuable resource for overall political, social, economic and ecological regeneration (Kosova Council for Cultural Heritage 2010b).

The aim to promote and conserve whatever is of value has particular resonance in its positive message. In this context, heritage and landscape preservation and a management framework is now slowly progressing. A set of laws and regulations have been approved in the field of cultural heritage protection, and technical guidelines are being developed under the European Union and Council of Europe joint project *Promoting Cultural Diversity in Kosovo* (Kosova Council for Cultural Heritage 2011a).

In general terms, there is a need for immediate action to physically improve and safeguard the architectural heritage damaged in 1998/1999, as well as neglected archaeological sites and

cultural landscapes. The return of archeological and ethnological collections to the museums of Kosovo and documentation of the monuments is essential. Public and professional access to places such as monasteries and Orthodox churches in Kosovo should be resolved (Kosova Council for Cultural Heritage 2010b).

The strategically emphasized terms for the conservation of Kosovo's cultural heritage will involve integration of cultural heritage preservation into social and economic development. The necessary integrated conservation to be achieved requires powerful instruments, actions and funding, adhering to fair principles and international standards (Kosova Council for Cultural Heritage 2011b).

#### Conclusion

The cultural landscape of Kosovo has changed dramatically from 60 years ago, and much of what is left serves as evidence of Kosovo's diverse cultural traditions. The conservation and management framework for preservation of cultural heritage assets is progressing. The basic legal acts have been approved according to international principles. Kosovo's authorities have begun to pay attention to preservation through application of preventive conservation, the reinforcement of laws, the establishment of proper inventory systems, and the modernization of the administration and of the education system, to mention a few (Kosova Council for Cultural Heritage 2011b).

This is a learning process for the people and the country's decision makers, as well as for the specialists who require particular types of education and training at a number of levels, from specialist inventory techniques, information systems and digital mapping, to fund raising and fostering public awareness of the role of cultural heritage in contemporary society as both a human resource and an economic asset.

Considering the breadth of meanings in this context, as well as the involvement of practically all cultures of the world in the heritage conservation movement, Kosovo needs support in terms of political good will, professional skills and proper funding (Kosova Council for Cultural Heritage 2011c), and will welcome any bilateral or multilateral cooperation.

#### Note

The designation of Kosovo is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independency (European Union 2012).

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# The UNESCO restoration project for St. Savior Church, Prizren, Kosovo

Laurence Lepetit, FRANCE

## Introduction

Following the 2005 UNESCO conference of donors for cultural heritage in Kosovo (see Note) the French non-governmental organization (NGO) *Patrimoine sans frontières* (PSF) was designated to coordinate the French and German joint project on the Orthodox Church of St. Savior in Prizren. This case study aims to present the issues of post-conflict heritage restoration in Kosovo from the perspective of an international NGO worker.

St. Savior Church is located in the historic city of Prizren in southern Kosovo (Fig. 1). The city was an important religious, political and economic centre in the Middle Ages under Serbian rule, as well as during the Ottoman period where it was a diplomatic hub of the Kosovo Vilayet (province). The city used to be cosmopolitan and renowned for its artistic life. In the 19th century, it played an important role in the

Albanian nationalist uprising by initiating the league for the Defence of the Rights of the Albanian Nation commonly known as the *League of Prizren* (Castellan 1991). Before the 1999 war in Kosovo, the city had a heterogeneous population of Albanian, Serbs, Bosniaks, Turks and Roma; nowadays the city is mainly Albanian with small communities of Bosniaks and Turks. Due to its rich history, Prizren has a diversity of cultural heritage buildings from Serbian Orthodox or Muslim origins, as well as important military and civil architecture. The most famous monuments are the Kaljaja fortress, the Church of the Virgin of Ljeviša (a UNESCO World Heritage site), St. Savior Church, the Sinan Pasha Mosque, the Gazi-Mehmet Pasha hammam and the old stone bridge.

St. Savior Church is an example of late Byzantine architecture and mediaeval Serbian fresco painting. It has two major architectural parts: an older part dated from the 14th century (after 1330) covered with frescoes and a more recent annex from the 19th century (1836) with a belfry that remained unfinished. The church is protected under the Martti Ahtisaari plan of March 2007 (United Nations Security Council 2007). It is included in the historic centre of Prizren's protected zone. The church is located in the historical quarter of *Podkaljaja* which was traditionally inhabited by Serbs, and lies on the



Figure 1. Prizren and St. Savior Church from the Stone bridge. Copyright of PSF. Credit: Arno Fougères 2009.

way to the medieval fortress of Kaljaja. During the civil war in 1999, part of this neighbourhood was destroyed and then abandoned. The church was burnt in 1882 and subsequently in the riots of March 2004 (Fig. 2).

### The situation

During the conflict of 1999, as well as its immediate aftermath and again during the March 2004 riots, Kosovo cultural heritage of



Figure 2. Serbian district destroyed. Copyright of PSF. Credit: Arno Fougères 2009.

both Albanian and Serbian communities suffered extensive damage due mostly to deliberate aggression. As in many other nationalist conflicts (Stanley-Price 2007), the nature of the destruction shows that it was not merely collateral damage but was intended to eradicate the historical presence as well as the contemporary lives of the target community.

In 1999, among the monuments reported to have been intentionally destroyed or damaged

by the air strikes were: the Gračanica monastery; the Dečani moastery, Peć/Peja Patriarchate, and others, the Sinan Pasha Mosque in Prizren, the Prizren League museum, and the historic bazaars in Djakovica/Gjakova. While Orthodox monuments suffered from the bombing, most of the intentional destruction targeted Albanian traditional and Ottoman buildings. Many authors such as Robert Bevan assert that “the destruction of Kosovo’s non-Serb architectural heritage was a planned and methodical element of ethnic cleansing” (Bevan 2006, 85). If Orthodox cultural heritage emerged relatively unscathed during the war – either from NATO bombs or from Albanian rebels – the situation changed for the worse afterward. The main cultural heritage sites were protected by international forces, but less well-known churches in rural areas abandoned by the fleeing Serb minority were easy targets for revenge in the immediate aftermath of the war. However, the principal destructive campaign against Serbian heritage occurred in March 2004 following the accidental drowning of some Albanian children, attributed by the press to Serbian responsibility on 16 March 2004 (Corley and Bjelajac 2004; Anon 2004).

The March 2004 violence outraged Serbian newspapers and officials such as Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica, who described the attacks as “planned and coordinated ... this was an attempted pogrom and ethnic cleansing against Kosovo’s Serbs” (Anon 2004). However

although the population suffered from the outburst, the attacks were not aimed at erasing Serbian minorities by massive genocide. They were primarily directed at architectural cultural heritage. Some of the most emblematic monasteries and Orthodox churches were the targets of the crowd. In Prizren for example, all the Serbian Orthodox sanctuaries were set on fire: the diocesan house, the theological faculty, the 14th-century Holy Mother Church of Ljeviska, the Holy Archangels monastery and also the Church of Saint Savior on the so-called “Serbian hill.”

Following these events, the First International Conference of donors for cultural heritage in Kosovo was held on the 13th of May 2005 by UNESCO with the collaboration of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the Council of Europe and the European Commission. It was aimed at helping in the restoration, protection and preservation of the many Christian and Islamic monuments and other sites of major historical importance, which had been targets of destruction in Kosovo during the 1999 civil war and March 2004 riots. The German and French governments decided to join in a common action towards the restoration of Kosovo’s vulnerable heritage. The historical French and German collaboration example was highly symbolic in terms of post-war reconciliation for a region shaken by civil war and ethnic conflict. The donors chose to implement two projects: restoration of the Orthodox Church of St. Savior in Prizren and the Byzantine-Ottoman bridge of Vushtrri/Vucitrn.

### Bureaucratic considerations

Following the donor’s conference, PSF, who had previous experience in the country, was designated in autumn 2005 to coordinate the restoration projects under a UNESCO umbrella, with the cooperation of the two donor countries and the support of UNMIK and local authorities.

In 2005, the political situation of Kosovo was still unstable and the status of the region uncertain; negotiations between Serbian and Albanian authorities were problematical. Consequently, there was a legal vacuum regarding who had juridical responsibility for the region’s cultural heritage, specifically Orthodox heritage. This factor created a labyrinth of decision makers: the Serbian Church in Belgrade (owner of the buildings); the provisional institutions of Kosovo at national and regional level (legal guardians); UNMIK (legal guardian); myriad international organizations with heritage mandates and the International Kosovo forces (KFOR) who were responsible for the buildings’ security. The blurry legal situation was not totally clarified by the independence of Kosovo because its state status was not recognized by EU and UN institutions, whereas the two donors (Germany and France) recognized Kosovo as a sovereign country.

While waiting for the legal situation to be cleared up, *Patrimoine sans frontières* was asked by the donors in 2006 and 2007 to conduct the necessary preliminary technical assessments. The sensitivity of the cultural subject in regional status negotiations explained why the situation remained insoluble long after Kosovo’s independence in February 2008. The Martti Ahtisaari plan for the Kosovo status settlement dedicated a full chapter to cultural and religious heritage. To the author’s knowledge, it is the first binding document where heritage has such importance in political negotiations. One of the devices created to regulate disputes over Serbian cultural heritage was the Implementation Monitoring Council (IMC). As a collegial institution, it was composed of one representative of the following institutions: Ministry of Culture/IPM/Serbian Orthodox Church/OSCE/Council of Europe/UNESCO. Those institutions recognizing only partially the legitimacy of the





Figure 3. St. Savior Church and the German KFOR. Copyright of PSF. Credit: Arno Fougères 2009.

others, the first necessary legal agreements relative to the UNESCO donor's conference of 2005 were only signed in autumn 2008. By that time, financial possibilities were reduced and the donors had to reconsider the overall project; they decided to concentrate on the Serbian Orthodox Church of Prizren. The Vushtrri project was turned down because a private development company was planning to implement a garden and a restaurant around the bridge with local municipal support.

### The challenge

The Church of St. Savior is located at the top of a hill overlooking the Prizren valley and therefore was used until spring 2010 by KFOR as an observation point (Fig. 3). While PSF had the full cooperation of the troops, who offered technical support for the works, their presence made technical assessment difficult as they were camping in the church and restricting its access. On the one hand, the heritage site was disconnected from the Albanian population as well as deserted by the Serbians and on the other hand its military purpose channeled a lot of resentment from the local population.

Therefore, PSF had to face several challenges:

- The technical challenge in itself to conduct appropriate documentation and restoration of the church with local and international experts, trying to involve local forces as much as possible;

- Conducting the works with as little friction as possible between institutions and the maximum legitimacy from international and national authorities;
- Proposing outreach activities to involve Prizren's population in the restoration works.

### Positive factors

Cultural heritage programmes can have positive economic and social impacts on post-conflict societies. In economic terms, they can provide jobs, foster cooperation and transmission of know-how and boost the local economy by using local materials and employing local firms. In social terms, they can participate in creating social links between communities, create space for exchanges and interaction and



Figure 4. Restoration works on the 19th-century structure. Copyright of PSF. Credit: Arno Fougères 2010.

nurture the opportunity for victims to process the experience they have been through.

In terms of economic impacts, the project was a success in involving local expertise and providing a space for professional exchanges and transmission of techniques between international and local experts. For that purpose, we built an international team composed in the first phase of documentation and technical analysis by experts from the Institute for the Monuments of Prizren (IPM - archaeology and architecture);

the Studio Sajeve from Palermo in Italy (engineering), the French restorer Aurélia Chevalier from France (wall paintings), the architecture studio MP Design from Istanbul and G & G Group Tirana, Albania (geology, geophysics, etc.) and the University of Marburg (history of art). In the second phase, PSF partnered with the Swedish NGO with local offices in the Balkans – “Cultural Heritage without Borders” (<http://chwbkosovo.org>) – to implement the restoration works on the building itself (Fig. 4). Restoration decisions were made jointly by the architect in chief of IPM Prizren and the CHWB project coordinator supervised by PSF's scientific board. Then two French restorers together with students from the French university la Sorbonne in Paris completed the restoration work on the frescoes (Fig. 5). Local contractors were also hired to provide the necessary materials, chosen carefully considering local resources.



Figure 5. Consolidation and cleaning of the 14th-century frescoes. Copyright of PSF. Credit: Arno Fougères 2010.

In terms of social impact, there was at first a problem of access prior to spring 2010. Indeed, the site was still guarded by the German KFOR. Their mandate to restrict access and protect the heritage made it difficult for Albanian and Kosovar experts to enter the site easily. It also impeded the local population from following the works. The army's withdrawal in spring

2010 changed the situation. During the entire duration of the restoration works, even if the site could not be fully opened to the public, people on their way to the fortress stopped by and asked questions. Social interaction was also possible in the local cafes and restaurants, and this opportunity for contact was invaluable during the six years the church was a restricted area. However, after the works, the church gate closed again to the population and it would be probably be long before it opened again. Due to the rigid framework of the project; we failed to obtain the necessary authorizations to include this project in other initiatives led by CHWB or Intersos, such as for example the heritage bike tours for European Cultural Heritage days. Those initiatives contribute a lot in terms of bridging communities together through heritage.

Five years after the donor's conference in UNESCO, the restoration works were completed in summer 2010. The opening of the church by German and French officials, UNESCO, the Serbian Church and local authorities was scheduled for September 2011. The delay between the completion of the work and the official opening is understandable, as heritage issues are still highly sensitive in the region.

### Conclusion

Heritage in post-nationalist conflicts is a sensitive subject but overall a political one. The main difficulties faced during the project duration (2005–2010) were due to the unsettled status of Kosovo together with the complexity of the institutional scheme at both regional and international levels. The strengths and weaknesses of an internationally based NGO working in those contexts are to be outside the political net. An NGO depends on political circumstances but at least it has the capacity to work with all the stakeholders and go beyond political boundaries. Post-conflict actions towards

cultural heritage should be performed very carefully in order to have sustainable social and economic impacts. If it is necessary to secure donor attention soon after a conflict, programmes should be implemented when the conditions are met to empower national authorities in heritage reconstruction and reach local communities.

#### Note

All references to Kosovo, whether the territory, institutions or populations, in this text are understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo. The present article reflects the author's point of view and is not in any case the official position of *Patrimoine sans frontières*.

#### About the author

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# The destruction of the old city of Nablus in 2002

Sherin Sahouri, PALESTINE

#### Context

This study aims to review and analyze the past and current situation of archaeology in Palestine while taking the city of Nablus as a case study. Specifically, it will discuss the destruction of the old city during the 2002 conflict in Nablus in the context of the second *Intifada*. Archaeology in Palestine represents a very special case which needs to be studied and analyzed widely, as archaeology and history have been the target and the justification of the occupation at the same time.

The Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage (DACH) of Palestine was first established during the period of the British Mandate in 1920. After 1948, the DACH ceased functioning due to the occupation and the transfer of authority to Jordan for the West Bank and to Egypt for the Gaza strip.

The West Bank is currently divided into three zones, called Areas A, B and C (Fig. 1). As a result of a Palestinian-Israeli agreement in 1993, control of some areas was transferred to Palestine. The first two areas to be handed over were Jericho and the Gaza strip. Afterwards, during the autumn of 1994 and December of 1995, the Palestinian National Authority took control throughout the West Bank and Gaza strip but was only able to work on archaeological sites in areas A and B (Taha 1998, 2004, 2005).

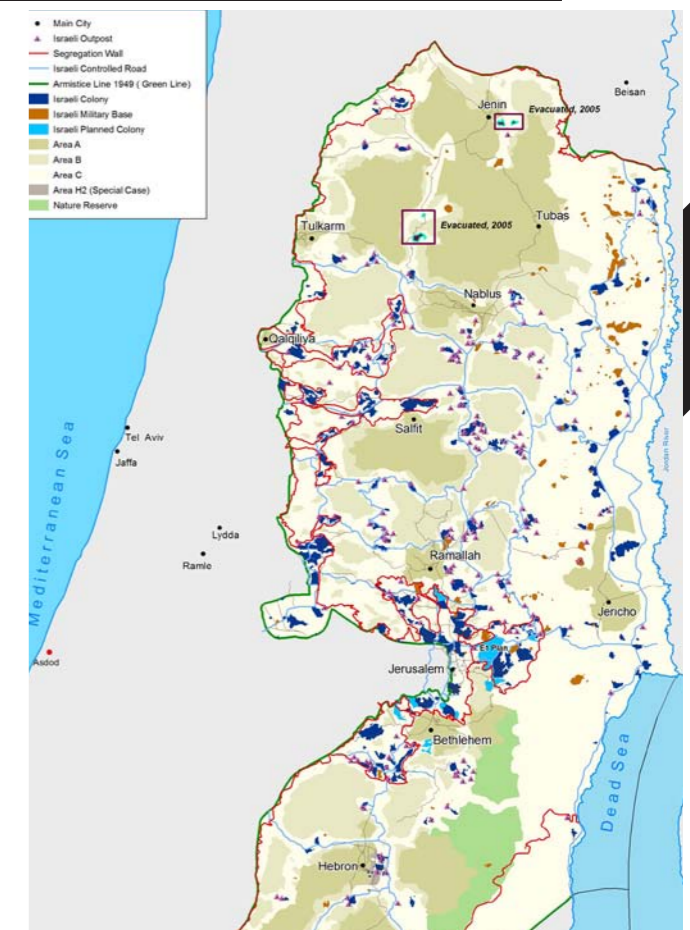


Figure 1. Geopolitical map of the West Bank (2011). Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem, reproduced with permission.

Together, areas A and B represent about 38 % of the West Bank. Area A includes the major

Palestinian cities and area B is mostly rural. Area A is under Palestinian civil and security authority. Area B is under Palestinian civil authority and under the shared authority of Israel and Palestine for security. The remaining 62% of the West Bank is called area C, where



Figure 2. Catholic church in Al Bassa Arab village of 1948, Acre. Credit: Sherin Sahouri. Copyright of the author.

Israel has authority over law enforcement and control over building and planning (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs occupied Palestinian territory 2010, 1).

Areas B and C include a large number of cultural and natural heritage sites. In some parts within area C, powers and responsibilities over archaeology were to be transferred gradually to Palestinian jurisdiction (Anon. 1993, art. 1). This agreement was never completed as planned, and with the absence of a final peace agreement, Israel remains an occupying power in the Palestinian territory and is therefore bound by provisions dealing with cultural property in various international legal instruments, for instance, in the *Hague Convention* of 1907, the *Fourth Geneva Convention* of 1949, and the Hague Convention of 1954 and its *First Protocol* signed and ratified by Israel; many other resolutions and recommendations concerning cultural property also apply, such as the *UNESCO Recommendation on International Principles Applicable to Archaeological Excavations* of 1956 (Oyediran 1997, 9-18).

### The situation

As a result of Israeli control over the territory, many sites have been abandoned and left derelict, not only in the West Bank but also in the Arab cities of 1948, where citizens are not permitted to renovate or restore any historic or traditional building or site (Fig. 2). Cultural heritage sites have been victims of occupation since its beginning, and since 2000, a great number of cultural heritage sites have been damaged directly or indirectly in most of the Palestinian cities. In many cases, historic towns and cities have been targeted by military operations, which have become ever more frequent. The Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, the old city of Bethlehem, Hebron (Fig. 3) and



Figure 3. Historic buildings in Hebron. Copyright of DACH, reproduced with permission.

Nablus, among others, suffered from irreparable damage to infrastructure and components. Sieges, curfews, roadblocks and military closures imposed on Palestinian cities and villages have prevented the DACH from functioning properly to protect cultural heritage.

Another major threat to Palestinian heritage is the separation wall constructed by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territory, including in and around Jerusalem (Fig. 4). This is a huge system of concrete walls, razor wire, trenches and fences, cutting into the West Bank and Gaza and separating people from their land and history. The great impacts of the wall on Palestinian daily life are not only economic and social, but



Figure 4. Separation wall of Kherbet Salah Abu Deis. Copyright of DACH, reproduced with permission.

also entail a destructive impact on numerous important archaeological remains, heritage sites and cultural landscapes (Taha 2010).

Most importantly, there is also a lack of awareness of the importance of cultural heritage among the public, due to the heavy impact of the political and ideological claims placed on archaeology by the occupiers and the Israeli settlement policy. The average Palestinian views archaeology as part of the occupation system and consequently, in many cases, as a threat. The DACH has helped in gradually transforming this perception to seeing that signs and remains from the past carry our identity and values and are not merely one aspect of the occupation. This transformation is evoking a chain of positive reactions in Palestinian society.

The absence of a national management body for antiquities and cultural heritage (involving DACH, academic programmes, and non-governmental organizations) in Palestine is one of the main obstacles to the future of cultural heritage and archaeology, as most of the organizations involved are working

according to their own plans and not following a coherent national strategy.

### The conflict in Nablus

Nablus has been home to several civilizations that lived, built and left their traces in the city through its five millennia of history. The notable earliest history of the city of Nablus is assembled in the remains of ancient Shechem, with its large, dry-stone walls located a few kilometers outside the current city. The name of Nablus derives from its old name “Neapolis” (new city) which was given to it by the Romans. The Roman period was followed by the Byzantine period, the Islamic period, Crusaders and then the Ottoman era (Anon 1997).

The current old city of Nablus includes a large number of significant historic buildings that date back to the several periods in which they were built. Eighteen of the old buildings date back to the Byzantine era and Crusader period. The historic monuments can be summarized as follows: nine mosques (four built on Byzantine churches and five from the early Islamic period); an Ayyubid mausoleum; the 17th-century St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church; Ottoman-era structures such as two major *Khans* or inns (including the Khan al-Waqaleh which was built in the 18th century with remains from the 12th century); ten Turkish bath houses; 30 olive-oil soap factories (seven of which were functioning before the bombardment); plus 2,850 historic houses and family complexes (Negotiations Affairs Department n.d.).

Nablus, with its 180,000 inhabitants, was bombed and shelled by Israeli military forces for eighteen days, beginning on 3 April 2002. The infrastructure and buildings of the entire city were affected, and the two-millennia-old historic core (*Qasaba* in Arabic) suffered the most. Sixteen-thousand residents and

hundreds of economically viable business centres were located in the old city, and most of them were highly affected or totally destroyed. As a result of the steady bombardment, at least 100 families lost their homes as well as family members, in many cases several from the same family (ICOMOS Palestine 2003).

The military ordnance deployed during the incursion varied from heavy bombs and tank artillery to strafing fire and remote-controlled explosives. Military bulldozers were used to pave the way for tanks, thereby damaging the narrow alleyways, destroying facades and walls and even demolishing historic residential buildings. In order to facilitate ground invasions, timed explosives were used to create passageways through complexes of historic buildings (ICOMOS Palestine 2003).

#### Post-destruction interventions

Immediately after the first wave of destruction, several teams composed of four to five Palestinian engineers, architects and municipal experts started preparing a survey for the old city and other affected areas in Nablus. The survey was based on questionnaires, interviews with residents and personal evaluations of site conditions. The ten working teams were coordinated and managed by a steering committee composed of the Nablus municipality and representatives of UNDP, al-Najah University, the Palestinian Engineers' Association and the Palestinian Contractors' Union (ICOMOS Palestine 2003).

The site surveys revealed that virtually every building in the old city had been affected by the attacks. The damage ranged from light (fallen plaster, broken windows and doors or other small architectural elements) to severe, and up to total destruction (Al-Dabbeek *et al.* 2002).

More than 300 buildings were seriously damaged structurally or even totally destroyed,



Figure 5. Nabulsi Soap Factory, Nablus, before the incursion (left) and after (right). Copyright of DACH, reproduced with permission.

while a larger number – some 5,000 buildings – suffered light and moderate damage. Several soap factories were totally eradicated, including the al Kanaan and al Nabulsi factories, which date back to the Ottoman era (Fig. 5). Many housing complexes (*Ahwash*) were totally or partially destroyed, an important example being al Sho'ebah Hosh (Fig. 6), also dating back to the Ottoman era. Other important historic buildings affected were Al Khadra Mosque, the oldest mosque in Nablus (converted



Figure 6. Ruins of the Al Sho'ebah House, Nablus. Copyright of DACH, reproduced with permission.

in 1187 from church to mosque) and Al Shifa Hammam, an Ottoman-era bathhouse built in 1720.

The old city's infrastructure was destroyed by the ponderous maneuvering of heavy tanks. Newly tiled stone streets, original stone walkways, recently renovated water and sewage lines beneath passageways, consolidating works done on several historic structures, and restored or original windows, doors and arches were all severely impacted. The damage did not stop there, and also included a ruined electrical network, with felled pylons and power lines. The destruction inflicted upon the old city's street furniture – sidewalks, curbstones, signposts, utility poles, fences, landscaping, and phone booths – has affected the future of tourism directly in the city of Nablus and generally in all the cities of the West Bank (ICOMOS Palestine 2003).

The people of Nablus were quick to repair the damage, but “unfortunately” by using concrete rather than properly restoring the original construction (Amiry and Hadid 2002). Conserving architectural heritage was not on people's agenda at that moment and was considered a luxury that only a few could afford. Dealing with the loss of a huge number of lives, whole residential buildings and all kinds of services was more urgent at first.

Major projects were implemented during this period, such as reconstructing buildings that were totally ruined. Many local organizations still work in cooperation with DACH to restore, consolidate and rebuild important historic buildings affected by the Israeli attacks. These projects aim to help in revitalizing the old city of Nablus, which lost many of its inhabitants.

Based on the preliminary investigation of the damage, there was an urgent need to use some temporary protection and set out different criteria and measures to be employed. The main purpose of the investigation was not only to identify the current structural condition of

the buildings but also to determine in detail the nature and degree of damage and design and install emergency measures for temporary support. It was important to avoid the risk of casualties and injuries, as well as to minimize any material losses if a structure collapsed.

Immediate temporary support was recommended for several buildings which were on the verge of collapse. Severe damage appeared either as a ruptured column or as serious cracking of load-bearing walls. Immediate measures helped to relieve damaged elements of their load by means of additional temporary props and thus protected the structure against any future shocks or effects of gravity on weak elements. The purpose was to provide temporary strength or support for those damaged elements and connections on which the safety of the whole structural system depends (Al Dabeek *et al.* 2002, 1).

Although the World Cultural Heritage Committee meeting at UNESCO headquarters in April 11, 2002 regretted Israel's destruction of Palestinian cultural heritage sites, the destruction went largely unreported and unnoticed by the international media. The international response to the destruction of Nablus was felt to be lacking by most Palestinians. At the time, Palestinian cultural heritage sites could unfortunately not be inscribed on UNESCO's “List of World Heritage in Danger,” as they were not inscribed on the World Heritage List. Now that Palestine has signed and ratified the World Heritage Convention, it is now possible to inscribe the sites in danger at the request of the Palestinians.

#### Important questions and conclusions

Now that time has passed since the end of the invasion, a main question arises: Was the destruction necessary to fight so-called terrorism? According to Amnesty International (2002, 37, 45), “A number of religious and

historical sites were partially destroyed or severely damaged and it frequently appeared to be wanton destruction without military necessity. (...) the destruction of these historic sites must be questioned." The report concludes: "During military operations, commercial, religious, cultural and civic buildings were destroyed without absolute military necessity. Nablus suffered particularly severe destruction not only of its commercial buildings but also of religious and cultural buildings dating back several centuries."

Despite the fact that what happened in Nablus is a tragedy in all respects, it can still be considered as a successful example of dealing with cultural heritage after conflicts. Post-conflict destruction of the buildings was limited; citizens implemented small-scale projects or simple first-aid measures. Despite the fact that incompatible modern materials and methods were used instead of traditional ones, they were able to save many houses and keep the old city going. The very next day after the military operation ended, the market was again open and full of people. Moreover, the expert teams that evaluated the damage helped greatly in determining priorities, and their work assisted interested organizations in selecting the buildings that most needed attention. So far, many buildings, especially those that were severely damaged, have not been rebuilt. Nonetheless, many other buildings have already been restored and rehabilitated by either the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities or national NGOs and funded by international organizations and institutions.

Following the events in the old city centre of Nablus during the Israeli incursion, the World Heritage Committee expressed its concern over the possible destruction and damage of Palestinian heritage at its 26th session in Budapest (June 2002). The committee recognized the outstanding universal values of Palestinian heritage, and supported the preparation of a tentative list of Cultural and Natural Heritage sites of potential outstanding universal value in Palestine. The list reflects the country's cultural and natural diversity and its importance nationally and internationally (Taha 2010).

Given those decisions, various local bodies prepared and submitted nomination documents to the World Heritage Committee for inscribing Bethlehem on the World Heritage List. Now that Palestine has become a Member State of UNESCO (November 2011), the DACH intends to re-submit nominations for Bethlehem and other cities and sites.

With Palestine's new status in UNESCO, a few questions still remain unanswered: Will Palestinian archaeological sites be protected from any future destruction? Will international committees be able to draw attention to those actions and help put an end to them?

Nablus, a city that has survived over centuries despite numerous invasions, entered history for second time after this specific attack. When destruction makes everything look alike, physical constructs lose their importance as tangible heritage while their memory takes on new significance. Many houses have been totally erased, but their memory remains palpable; though the Nabulsi soap factory was totally destroyed, Nabulsi soap can still be found, and the traditional method of making soap will forever be transferred to new generations.

This conflict affecting a people and its heritage are equal parts of the same strategy: to target the symbols of community identity. In this case, as many immediate structural interventions must continue in order to save as much as we can of the built heritage, many international legal interventions should also stop the damage inflicted to Palestinian cultural heritage in order at least to save what still remains.

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# Protection of abandoned churches in Northern Cyprus: Challenges for reuse

Hülya Yüceer, TURKEY

## Introduction

Religious buildings are associated with common spiritual values of communities and as heritage sites they possess great significance. In the case of armed conflicts between groups of different religious affiliations, they either become the first targets of destruction or are abandoned when communities are displaced. Reflections on the problem of abandoned religious heritage sites conjure their presence in the Cyprus conflict.

Conflict in Cyprus has its roots in the inter-communal dispute between two ethnic communities sharing the island: Greeks and Turks, who are affiliated with Christianity and Islam, respectively. The conflict resulted in the displacement of the two communities in 1974, a situation which has still not been resolved to date. As expected under such circumstances, places of worship that have not been used become obsolete since the community that originally used them no longer exists. Meanwhile, on the north of the island where Turkish Cypriots are distinctly in the majority, some of those buildings are given functions different than their original uses and a few still serve their original purpose. The issue of abandonment and improper handling of churches was mentioned in several reports that were presented to international commissions,

forming an important agenda in the case of the Cyprus conflict (Grieboski and Porter 2009; Law Library of Congress 2009; UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 2009; Association of Cypriot Archaeologists 2011).

Considering that the conflict has been going on for nearly forty years, the obsolescence led to major decay within the buildings that had not been maintained for so long. As an alternative response, this paper questions whether adaptive reuse of places of worship can be a solution for their survival, taking into account that it is still a sensitive issue when performed by a different religious and ethnic group. It will examine the case of the walled city of Famagusta, which is peculiarly different than the other regions in the north of the island. That is because some of the churches in Famagusta, which date back to the medieval period, were either destroyed during a long siege of the town in 1571 or converted to mosques during Ottoman reign. Today, apart from the ones converted to mosques, most of them are still dormant as ruined structures and a few have been given new uses. This discussion is carried out by analysing the present condition and uses of the churches in Famagusta in relation to effects of conflict and by focusing on the restoration and re-use process of St. Peter and St. Paul Church. Such an example illustrates the challenges of

assigning a new use to a building that is significant for its diverse religious value without harming its essential features.

## The Cyprus conflict and its effects on cultural heritage

Cyprus has housed different cultures throughout its long history. Ruled by Lusignans, Venetians, Ottomans and the British, the island gained independence in 1960. However, soon after the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus, inter-communal violence flared between the island's two major ethnic groups, Greek and Turkish Cypriots, ending with the intervention of the Turkish government in 1974. Since then, the two communities have lived separately, divided by a buffer zone controlled by the United Nations. In the process of separation, Greek Cypriots who used to live in the northern part were relocated to the south of the island, whereas Turkish Cypriots initially living in the south had to move to the north. In 1983, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus was established, but is still not recognized by any country other than Turkey (Fig. 1).



Figure 1. Map of Cyprus..

This political situation of 38 years has attracted a worldwide embargo which has had a direct effect on the economic growth of the northern part of the island, causing difficulties for Turkish Cypriots who find it challenging to obtain sources of finance for projects involving heritage protection. A high percentage of the

island's built heritage is made up of religious buildings, comprising more than 500 churches, chapels and monasteries (Enlart 1899; Jeffery 1918; Parlalidou n.d.). Except for the ones that had been given other functions, these structures were largely abandoned after the conflict. Since the vast majority of the Christian community now lives in the south, very few people continue to use the handful of churches and chapels located in the north. Moreover, any heritage sites that remained in the buffer zone are now mostly derelict, with no proper protection measures or allocated security.

In 2003, after the easing of border restrictions, Greek and Turkish Cypriots began to cross the island's dividing line for the first time in nearly thirty years. Visiting their former houses and those of their neighbours before displacement, they witnessed the impact of abandonment on the physical remnants of their past. Nevertheless, though the cultural heritage sites of a community become a target during times of conflict; they can also be used as peace-building tools between communities. In relation to this, a series of goodwill initiatives ended up with the adoption of the proposal made by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (subcommittee on cultural heritage) regarding the establishment of an international foundation for protection of the cultural heritage of Cyprus (Council of Europe 2008). The proposal was inspired by the need to protect the cultural heritage of the whole island, enabling cooperation with the Turkish Cypriot side. In this context, governments and international organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme's *Partnership for the Future* (UNDP-PFF) and the United States Agency for International Development's *Supporting Activities that Value the Environment* (USAID-SAVE) have assisted in the protection of heritage sites as a tool for peace-building, implementing heritage projects in the

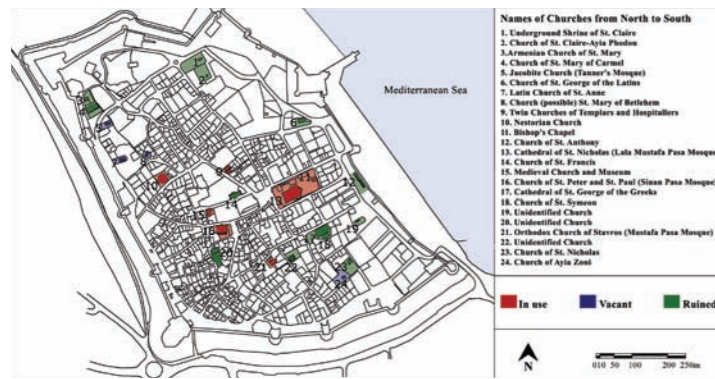


Figure 2. Map of Famagusta indicating the churches with present state of use.

northern part of the island (UNDP n.d.). Urgent conservation work on St. Peter and St. Paul Church in Famagusta is one of the recent projects carried out in collaboration with international organizations.

**Protection of religious heritage as a sensitive issue: Challenges in reuse of churches in Famagusta**

Latin, Orthodox, Nestorian and Armenian churches, most of which are highly significant architectural pieces showing the artistic and engineering enlightenment of society in the past, make up the majority of religious heritage sites in Famagusta's walled city, as shown in Figure 2 (Walsh 2010). Although the city's population had been primarily Turks after it was taken over by the Ottomans, no new mosques had been introduced except the Akkule Mesjid,



Figure 3. Cathedral of St. Nicholas renamed as Lala Mustafa Paşa Mosque after 1571. Credit: Hülya Yüceer.

which was constructed adjacent to the main land gate of the fortification walls. Instead of constructing new mosques, the Ottomans' approach revolved around converting churches into mosques by altering the interiors and adding a minaret to replace the bell tower (Fig. 3). Today, Famagusta has twenty-four churches, some of which were damaged during the 1571 Ottoman siege (Fig. 4). While some were subsequently converted to mosques, including the most significant ones such as St. Nicholas Cathedral, St. Peter and Paul Church, Stavros Church and the Jacobite Church, the others were left abandoned (Walsh 2004). During British rule, with the establishment of the Department of Antiquities in 1935, an inventory of historic buildings was prepared, followed by some restoration work which was carried out to enable a few churches to return to their original function.

In the past 38 years, a few churches in Famagusta have been restored and either assigned new uses or serve as military storage. There are only three other pre-existing examples of churches that were assigned different uses after the conflict of 1974. For example, with the help of the Eastern Mediterranean University, the Nestorian church of St. George the Exiler (containing important wall paintings) was



Figure 4. A ruined church in Famagusta walled city: Church of St. George of the Greeks. Credit: Hülya Yüceer.

repaired in 1985 and has been acting as the university's cultural centre since then. The Twin Churches of the Templars and the Hospitallers (two separate churches side by side) are currently being used by the Cyprus Art Association for public events such as exhibitions and concerts. In all these cases, being given alternative functions has saved the churches from further decay and ensured their maintenance under the responsibility of specific institutions.

Until recently, except for the ruined churches, there were only three that remained intact as a whole: St. Peter and Paul Church in the centre of town and – to the northwest corner of the walled city – the Maronite church of St. Anne, which is a small Orthodox church, and the Jacobite church (also known as the “Tanner’s Mosque” or “Tabakhane”), both of which were inaccessible until November 2007 due to their integration into a military base in 1974 (Langdale and Walsh 2007). Therefore, attempts to protect the remaining intact churches focused on St. Peter and Paul Church, which initially had serious structural problems (Fig. 5).



Figure 5. Church of St. Peter and St. Paul during its restoration in November 2010. Credit: Hülya Yüceer.

Having served as a mosque during the Ottoman period, the St. Peter and St. Paul Church was

used as a wheat store during British rule and as a library afterwards, until it showed structural deformations that presented a risk to its users (Walsh 2004, 2007). Although it is one of the few examples of Latin churches remaining intact, protection measures were delayed by a lack of funding, leaving the church lying dormant for several years. Various attempts were launched by academics from local and international universities, the Municipality of Famagusta and several NGOs to solicit help in preserving the walled city's heritage, which resulted in an assurance of support from several international organizations. Two films called worldwide attention to the protection of Famagusta, and played an important role in stimulating several conservation works. These were *The Stones of Famagusta: the Story of a Forgotten City* (2008), directed by Dan Frodsham and Allan Langdale, and *Against the Clock* (2009), directed by Dan Frodsham.

Among the other initiatives was USAID-SAVE (<http://www.save-irg.com>), an organization that has carried out a number of conservation projects to ensure the ongoing protection and preservation of heritage sites, also initiating crucial structural and emergency masonry repairs for the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, in cooperation with the property owner, Cyprus Evkaf Administration, as can be seen on the project website (<http://www.evka.org>). These works were developed in accordance with a comprehensive existing condition survey, photogrammetric analysis and structural assessment, all of which USAID-SAVE conducted in collaboration with the international engineering firm GB Geotechnics Ltd. between 2008 and 2009. Subsequently, USAID-SAVE continued to work with local and international experts and in consultation with all stakeholders to ensure that this historic building is better protected and preserved for posterity. Construction services are being provided for USAID-SAVE by Halcken Insaat, a local

Famagusta firm, whereas GB Geotechnics Ltd. provides structural engineering services. Work began on site in September 2010 and was completed in January 2011.

### Concluding remarks

Moving on from the fact that this project constituted only emergency structural repairs that were vital for the building's survival as an integral entity and for public safety by preventing any structural failure, the case study represents a success in terms of the protection of a significant heritage site. Yet, the issue of providing a continuing use for the building still remains unresolved. Thus, after the completion of conservation work, the property owner – Cyprus Evkaf Foundation – gave the use of the building to the Municipality of Famagusta. Accordingly, the Famagusta Walled City Association (<http://famagustawalledcity.org/>) and the Cyprus Art Society organized a concert as an initial step in June 2011. The decision to convert the church into a cultural centre has not functioned as yet and this points out the fact that the building might not be effectively used. This situation reflects the challenges involved in assigning a new use for a religious building affiliated to the other ethnicity. While there is sensitivity towards keeping the interventions minimal and maintaining the original features, this acts as an obstacle for its sustainable use within the present community, since any given new function is determined by the building's original features and limits alterations that would allow a wider range of functions and effectiveness of investments. In the larger

context, it remains a challenge to propose a compatible use for a building that represents a sensitive issue for all obsolete churches in the north.

Churches seem to be much more complicated than other building types in line with the expectation that adaptive reuse of historic buildings should consider the values associated with them. On the one hand, people's perception of churches is mainly associated with their sacred role, so they hold a more complicated set of varying values. On the other hand, the number of religious heritage sites converted for different purposes is continuously increasing in Europe and the United States, taking a step further in adaptive reuse of churches for more practical purposes. This shows that the sensitivity and fragility of the issue increases in conflict situations. In other words, when the building is to be reused by another community, the process turns into more of a challenge, during which these structures are abandoned without any maintenance.

Considering that the resolution to the conflict in Cyprus has long been elusive, the approach to ensuring the protection of churches should consider their reuse and be integrated to a general plan of preservation in the region. Individual aids to some particular buildings are valuable in preserving their physical integrity and survival. Yet, a holistic approach which updates the current physical condition of places of worship, including churches, monasteries and chapels, and validates the current social dynamics of the north is essential for their sustainable protection.

### About the author

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# The reappearance of Ferhadija Mosque in Banja Luka

Medina Hadžihasanović-Katana, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

## Introduction

In the 16th century, Ferhad-pasha, the Bosnian *Sandjak bey* (high official) donated 30,000 ducats to build a mosque, *mekteb* (school), clock tower, fountain, town water supply, and roads to glorify the town of Banja Luka. His endowment also included other properties such as shops in the *charshiya* (marketplace), a *caravan-saray* (inn), a *hammam* (Turkish bath), landholdings, and others – all in order to provide funds for proper maintenance of endowment properties. All these buildings with the mosque as its centerpiece formed the new hub of Banja Luka, rising next to the Kastel fort. Although the city grew during subsequent centuries, no destruction of any kind occurred to Ferhad-pasha's Mosque or other buildings in the *charshiya*. According to its chronogram (Arabic inscriptions above the entrance portal), Ferhadija Mosque in Banja Luka was built in 1579 C.E. (987 A.H.) (Commission to Preserve National Monuments 2003).

Ferhad-pasha's Mosque (commonly known as Ferhadija) was the second largest mosque in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The ensemble also included three *turbes* (mausoleums of prominent persons, including Ferhad-pasha himself); a domed fountain, a graveyard and a walled inner courtyard. It had a multi-spaced ground floor roofed with a system of domes,

semi-domes and vaults. Its porch was roofed with three domes, the central one in a higher position to emphasize the entrance. The minaret was 42.7 meters high (Fig. 1).



Figure 1. Ferhadija mosque, Banja Luka, before the destruction. Copyright of Commission to Preserve National Monuments, reproduced with permission.

During the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1992 to 1995, cultural heritage was one of the main targets. Urban fabric was erased and historic buildings destroyed, including libraries, museums, historic houses and religious

buildings. Some 1,500 mosques in Bosnia and Herzegovina were dynamited and razed to the ground, after which their remains were smashed and thrown into river beds, city dumps, and other locations. The town of Banja Luka had 16 mosques, all of which were destroyed. The townspeople grieve over them all, but over Ferhadija Mosque the most. This place was cherished among all the inhabitants, regardless of their religion or nationality. Ferhadija Mosque was *the* major symbol of Banja Luka for all its inhabitants.

## The situation

Early in the morning on 7th May of 1993, Bosnian Serb Army troops blocked the central streets of Banja Luka, which also surrounded Ferhadija and Arnaudija mosques. At around 3 a.m., these two mosques were dynamited. Arnaudija Mosque was reduced to rubble. Ferhadija Mosque was initially more strongly built than Arnaudija and further strengthened after the 1969 earthquake with reinforced concrete belts and iron bars inside the minaret. However, the troops piled more explosives onto what was still standing and also used pneumatic drills, reducing the 500-year-old monument to gravel (Riedlmayer 2002).

In the aftermath, some Banja Luka inhabitants went into the mosque *harem* (courtyard) and took away a few pieces of Ferhadija to keep as a memory. Some of the most important parts of the mosque were saved inside the building of the Islamic community of Banja Luka, situated in the mosque harem itself. These were fragments of the *mihrab* (niche inside the wall pointing to Mecca towards which the congregation prays) and the *mimbar* (flight of steps used as a platform by the *Imam* [preacher]) with stalactites, calligraphy and coloured surfaces. By the 8th of May 1993, all of the material remnants had gone to various locations around Banja Luka.

## Discussion

Was destruction enough to erase the memory and stop the rehabilitation of Ferhadija? The Banja Luka inhabitants who survived the war, whether they managed to stay in town or were internally or externally displaced, all carried the memory of their beloved Ferhadija. Deep in their hearts, they believed that Ferhadija would rise again from the rubble. The memories and yearning were expressed through essays, poems, drawings, paintings, etc. Were these memories enough to make the rehabilitation actually happen? We have to answer “No” to this question. But, if we ask whether rehabilitation has importance in reconciliation, then the answer would be “Yes.”

A few important moments in the history of rehabilitation of destroyed Bosnian heritage must be mentioned at this point. The destruction was reported live by local people, professionals from the country or abroad, media representatives or others, and had a huge importance for later rehabilitations. These efforts led to incorporating cultural heritage protection (by the Commission to Preserve National Monuments) as Annex 8 of the *General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina* (also called the *Dayton Peace Agreement*) signed in Dayton, Ohio, USA in 1995. Work by the Commission to Preserve National Monuments on the designation of National Monuments of Bosnia and Herzegovina saved many monuments from being lost forever. Further political pressure from the Peace Implementation Council and Office of the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina led to giving building permits for rehabilitation and reconstruction of destroyed mosques in the Republika Srpska (one of two main political entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina), where most of the destroyed mosques were situated.

Although the war ended in 1995, major rehabilitation efforts only began after at least

five or six years. The end of war did not mean peace and reconciliation by itself, but simply marked the beginning of reconciliation endeavours. The role of religious heritage in Bosnia and Herzegovina was the most prominent when it came to the question of rehabilitation, because it was the most affected and had been used to foment hate and aggression. That being said, there have been testimonies from Bosnian Serbs who miss the mosques that were destroyed in their towns (Pašalić 1999).

In cases of deliberate destruction of monuments with which people identify, arguments to not reconstruct, to leave the present state as a historical fact, tend to give undue credit to the destroyers and discourage reconciliation and return of displaced people. The question of rehabilitation of destroyed monuments goes beyond the profession itself.

The beginning of the Ferhadija Mosque rehabilitation was to be celebrated on 7 May 2001 by symbolically laying a cornerstone, but major unrest marked the event. A few thousand protestors broke the cordon of 300 policemen and burst into the area of the mosque's courtyard. The Islamic community flag was burned and the buses which had brought pilgrims to the event. The sacrificial sheep was stolen and a pig was brought into the courtyard. More than 200 representatives of the international community were in

attendance, and were all trapped for some hours in the Islamic community building. This disturbance generated much negative commentary on rehabilitation and reconciliation, but did not keep these processes from happening. On 18 June 2001, Reisu-l-ulema Mustafa Cerić, in a well-secured ceremony, laid the cornerstone for rehabilitation of Ferhadija Mosque (Anon. 2002).

In 2005, UNESCO supported the initiative of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina to reconstruct three symbolic religious sites destroyed by war: the Ferhadija Mosque in Banja Luka, the Serbian Orthodox Cathedral in Mostar and the Catholic Plehan monastery in the town of Derвента.

#### The reconstruction

The Faculty of Architecture in Sarajevo formed a team to prepare a reconstruction plan for the Ferhadija Mosque ensemble, led by Prof. Dr. Muhamed Hamidović. The main objective was to reconstruct it as it had been, with the same materials, exact techniques and quality of details. For this purpose it was important to have excellent pre-destruction recordings of the mosque, photogrammetric recordings of



Figure 2. Ferhadija mosque, Banja Luka, rubble in the Ramići city dump. Images 2 to 5 –Credit: Medina Hadžihanović Katana. Copyright of the author.

the site, old photos and postcards, etc. The plan was finished in 2002 (Hamidović 2002).

Preparatory works started in 2005 on the Ramići waste dump. Fragments were scattered around as piles of rubble and also buried beneath five meters of compact waste (Fig. 2). The challenge of working in the Ramići waste dump was to work as fast as possible, and we were constantly reminded to hurry up. These works lasted three months and as a result more than 5,000 stone fragments (832,220 kg - ca. 462.4 m<sup>3</sup>) were pulled out and transported to the nearby village of Vrbanja for further analyses. In March 2007 a second site with discarded remains was opened. It was a gravel-pit in Karanovac – an artificial lake. These works lasted five months, and remains of pillars, bases of pillars, cornices and other mosque elements were found.

The stone fragments were washed and cleaned under the supervision of experts, after which they were all sorted by place and role. Recordings of the fragments pulled out from the Ramići site were partly done in 2006 by the Commission to Preserve National Monuments, and these works were funded by the US Ambassadors' Fund for Cultural Preservation. Further recordings of fragments were made with a 3D scanner Leica HDS 3000 camera with 9000 pixel resolution. Final modelling of each fragment was done by using several programs. More information can be found on the project website (<http://www.ferhadija.ba>).

An important issue for the Ferhadija reconstruction was finding the original stone quarry. After years of searching, it was finally identified along the Vrbas River in Banja Luka. Laboratory analysis showed a match between the stone used in the mosque and that found in the quarry.

The conservation work on the foundations was completed in 2006. In 2008, the bases of the pillars were laid down, followed by the assembly of the first course of the minaret. Further works followed, and the process is still going on. During the summer of 2010, a delegation from the Commission to Preserve National Monuments visited the site. Mosque walls were reconstructed to the level of the first cornice; the pillars, arches and walls of the ceilings were



Figure 3. Ferhadija mosque, Banja Luka, reconstruction in 2010.

completely rebuilt, and works to reconstruct small ceiling domes were taking place. The reconstruction of the minaret had also reached the first cornice level (Fig. 3).

The works remaining to be completed are: reconstructing the main dome, semi-dome and vaults above the main space; around 33 meters of the minaret to the final height of 42.70 m; interior works on the *mihrab*, *mimbar* and painted decorations; reconstruction of the fountain, three *turbes* and graves. Astonishingly, more than 60 per cent of the original building materials has now been located. As Riedlmayer (2008) explains, "it has taken years of patient investigation, some judiciously distributed bribes to people who knew where the stones had been taken and no small degree of luck."

The exact amount of the rescued fragments that will be put back into the building during its reconstruction will be known after completion of the works. Each fragment that was rescued either from the city dump in Ramići or the Karanovac artificial lake is important for the reconstruction of a mosque, either to be reassembled as an integral part or to provide more information on building techniques, decorations, etc. Updating of the reconstruction project is done regularly, depending on the works being done.

#### Critical evaluation and conclusion

The Ferhadija Mosque reconstruction is a long-term process, and one cannot exactly foresee when it will be completed. It took extensive preparatory activities to complete the reconstruction plan, search for and excavate material remains, locate the proper stone quarry, etc. An important issue during all such activities is finance, and fund-raising also takes time.

The team working on this project at first comprised architectural historians, conservation architects, structural engineers and architecture students. As the nature of the works changed, more skilled masons and carpenters were brought in. All the professional works have been led by Muhamed Hamidovic, and logistics have been covered by the Islamic community of Banja Luka.

I was part of the team in 2005 during the first preparatory phase when we delved into the Ramići city dump. The experience still brings up mixed feelings of sadness on seeing Ferhadija mosque in rubble covered by compact waste, and joy upon finding preserved mosque parts that could be reused and put back into place (Fig. 4). The process of recovering these remains was carefully done, in order not to damage any of the fragments. Finding parts of



Figure 4. Ferhadija mosque, Banja Luka, fragment of the sofa mihrab.

still-compact masonry with thin brick provided answers on how the curved parts of the building were built. The emphasis was on keeping as much of the original substance as possible.



Figure 5. Ferhadija mosque, Banja Luka, repositioned sofa mihrab.

From what I saw during my last visit in 2010, the reconstruction is being handled quite professionally: original materials are used, the same techniques are employed, and original fragments in good condition are being put again into place (Fig. 5).

Today, ten years after the ceremony of laying the cornerstone for rehabilitation and the unrest that marked the event, there is a peaceful atmosphere on the site. News agencies, local and national TV and radio stations are following the work process. There is a great interest from the displaced population from Banja Luka who are visiting the site and hoping that return to their homes will soon be possible. For them, the rehabilitation of Ferhadija Mosque is a milestone.

#### About the author

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# Sri Lankan archaeological heritage damaged by war: The restoration of the Dutch Fort of Jaffna

Samanthi Ranjith Priyanga Dissanayaka Mudiyansele, SRI LANKA

## Introduction

Sri Lanka is very rich in cultural heritage, but unfortunately a lengthy and violent conflict in this land destroyed not only the lives of thousands of citizens and their property but also a good deal of cultural heritage.

The Sri Lankan civil war originated when a guerrilla organization called the Liberation Tigers of Tamil *Eelam* (LTTE) sought to establish an independent Tamil state, Eelam, in northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka. As a result of this conflict, an historic building called the Dutch Fort of Jaffna was severely damaged. The aim of this case study is to discuss the destruction of the Dutch Fort and study the solutions adopted to ensure that this historic monument can be enjoyed by future generations; this project has involved the local community and the national army, among others.

The Dutch Fort of Jaffna was given first priority for restoration after the war because of its historical significance as well as its architectural value. It was also seen as having the potential of becoming an important tourist attraction for the area. Furthermore, Jaffna is an area mostly inhabited by the Tamil people (an ethnic group native to the north-eastern part of the country). By involving the local communities living around the area, this restoration project would

potentially bring together the Sinhala people (the ethnic majority in Sri Lanka, but minority in the Jaffna peninsula) with the Tamil people (the ethnic minority in Sri Lanka, but majority the Jaffna peninsula) to increase mutual understanding and strengthen trust between them. This would be an example of how the conservation of cultural heritage can be used to in helping to recover from conflict.

## The Dutch Fort of Jaffna

This fort is situated in the Jaffna district in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka, in the Nallur Grama Niladhari division of the Jaffna divisional secretariat (Department of Archaeology 2010a). This is the second-largest fort in Sri Lanka; it was



Figure 1. General view of the Dutch Fort of Jaffna. All images – Copyright of Department of Archaeology, reproduced with permission.

first built by the Portuguese and subsequently fortified by the Dutch (Fig. 1). The land-side entrance to the fort bears the number 1680, which archaeologists believe to be the year it was built.

Before the war began, the Tamils of Jaffna used this fort for their social and cultural events. With an administrative building, God temple (*Kovil*) and Roman Catholic church in the fort, it was used for both official and religious activities. Those ancient buildings were destroyed in the war, but the Tamil people in Jaffna still felt a close bond with the Dutch Fort.

The fort was built with advanced technology, while its large size, independent location, isolation from local population for administrative functions, coupled with a strategic defensive position, indicate the value of this monument (Nelson 1984; de Silva and Beumer 1988). It spread over an area of 14 acres, constructed in the shape of a star. The fort has two walls which are separated by a deep moat, with evidence of five guard towers on top. Inside the walls are separate administrative complexes. An armory, church and housing for senior officers can be identified. Until the first half of the 1990s, the ramparts and interior officers' quarters were still in good condition.

Since the early 1970s, there had been an army camp (now gone) located inside the fort, but there had been no damage to any part of the interior or the outer walls. In 1971, the government declared this fort as a listed monument for its own safety, but it did not survive the fallout from the decades of war.

The fort's restoration comes under a programme launched by the National Heritage and Cultural Affairs Ministry to renovate and preserve national heritage sites in the north and the east. The project would include the armories and barracks used by Dutch soldiers

in the 17th century, the tunnels that were destroyed during the war, a canal used for inner security, as well as the Queen's House (Fig. 2) and a damaged Roman Catholic church. The buildings in and around the fort will also be preserved (Fig. 3), and mud and landmines will be removed from the old moat.



Figure 2. Queen's House damaged by war, Dutch Fort of Jaffna.



Figure 3. Bell Tower, Dutch Fort of Jaffna.

## Sri Lanka's civil war and its effect on heritage

In 1948, Sri Lanka gained its independence from British colonial rule, and the fort of Jaffna came under the administration of the Sri Lankan government. As mentioned above, even after independence, Jaffna fort was preserved and remained in good condition for a long period. Its internal buildings were still suitable for occupation.

The on-and-off insurgency of the early 1980s against the Sri Lankan government by the LTTE intensified in the early 1990s, when militants attacked the army camp inside the fort. These attacks and counter-attacks by the Sri Lankan Army caused heavy damage: the northern and south-eastern sectors were destroyed, while the internal buildings were heavily damaged and the Dutch church was beyond salvation. It is important to emphasize that the conflict was not between Tamil civilians and other groups; it was between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government, and never against Tamil civilians.

The prevailing war situation prevented any archaeological work to restore the damaged parts of the buildings. Even though an army camp was located inside the fort, they could not intervene to prevent the degradation of the site, which allowed this fort to turn into an abandoned monument. This is an indirect effect of conflict. The non-intervention of the army to protect the site allowed trees to grow on the ramparts and other buildings (Fig. 4). Plant roots penetrated and weakened buildings, and the unattended moat filled with silt. Over three decades of civil war, occupation of the fort changed hands several times – back and forth between the Sri Lankan army and the LTTE. Parts of the damaged buildings were used as building materials for bunkers, and mining of the area caused further damage.



Figure 4. Entrance to the fort covered with vegetation, Dutch Fort of Jaffna.

A fort's primary purpose is to house an army garrison and establish power to protect its surroundings. Thus, maintaining an army camp inside the fort met this basic strategy, and during the conflict this fact was evident. Even though this was an archaeological monument, during war situations it reverted to its original function. Clearly, the events that unfolded during the conflict led to the destruction of this monument, but it is unclear who was directly responsible. The activities of both sides led to the fort's unfortunate fate.

#### Restoration of the Dutch Fort of Jaffna

In 2009, the Sri Lankan Army defeated the LTTE and won the war, leading to the return of a peaceful atmosphere and enabling long-neglected archaeological interests and enthusiasm to be revived. The Dutch Fort was the first project of the post-war period undertaken by archaeologists, and they encountered many challenges.

For one thing, the unbridled vegetation had to be urgently addressed, as root systems had invaded many buildings. Moreover, this conservation project required substantial funding, and obtaining such funds was a major obstacle. Apart from this, several areas of the fort had been heavily mined, and approaching these areas caused major security issues. Finally, this area had been a garrison for security forces since 1970, so archaeological work had to be conducted within certain limits. The war had reduced the old Dutch church to rubble, and it seemed beyond repair.

The Sri Lanka–Netherlands Cultural Cooperation Program provided the funds for conserving the Jaffna Dutch Fort, and attention has since been focused on conservation. Prior to the restoration work, it was essential to remove the vegetation and carefully de-mine the area. The Sri Lankan Army delicately carried out the latter task, enabling proper exploration to be conducted by archaeologists to assess and record the current situation. Subsequently, several locations were selected from inside as well as outside to be excavated with the aim of establishing the following factors:

- Identification of activities pertaining to periods prior to the fort's construction;
- Preparation of basic background for excavations;
- Identification of the construction methodology used by the Portuguese, Dutch and British (Department of Archaeology 2010b).

After the exploratory excavation activities, the walls and damaged buildings were cleared by removing the trees that had grown up (Figs. 5, 6). The chemistry division of the Department of Archaeology cut them down, and the remaining root systems were treated with sodium arsenate to destroy any lingering traces (Department of Archaeology 2010c).

#### Discussion

Despite the challenges, conservation work on the Jaffna Fort began in August 2010 and is scheduled for completion in 2012. Currently, the basic background study has been carried out, but practical problems have arisen. For example, there is a lack of skilled labour, as well as the equipment and tools required for conservation. Furthermore, the walls were constructed with coral, and adequate quantities of this material are hard to obtain (Department of Archaeology 2010d). Coral mining is now illegal in Sri Lanka, so limestone was used instead. Even the available quantity of limestone was

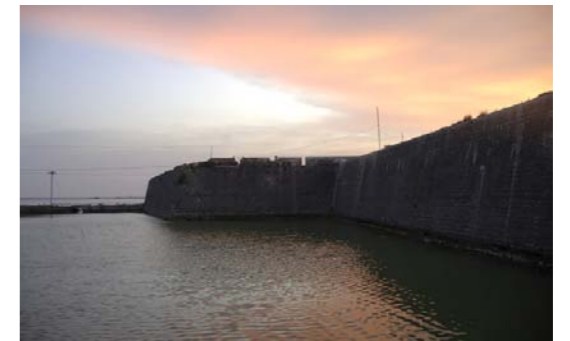


Figure 5. Rampart and the moat after conservation, Dutch Fort of Jaffna.



Figure 6. Rampart and the moat after conservation, Dutch Fort of Jaffna.

inadequate, so hollow cement blocks made out of a sand-cement mixture were used to complete the work. Breeze blocks are not approved for restoration work, and the use of such methodology is debatable. One section of the fort has been left as a model for future studies, while the rest will be completed.

Sri Lankans not only missed their companions but also lost their cultural heritage during the 30 years of war. Even before then, most Tamils interacted with the fort in some way. After the war, they were enthusiastically committed to contributing to efforts to protect the cultural heritage. The Tamil people and students of Jaffna University cooperated in this project, together with the Department of Archaeology. The contribution of the Tamil people as

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labourers in the restoration project was quite remarkable. The government and archaeologists showed a keen interest in this work, and the Sri Lankan army also pitched in. Tamil workmen assisted the officers, and university students joined in the archaeological exploration and conservation work. Thus, this project generated job opportunities for Tamil civilians and opportunities for Tamil archaeology students to get field experience. As a result of all this hard work, new life has been breathed into the Dutch Fort of Jaffna.

#### Conclusion

Restoration efforts for the Dutch Fort have been steadily progressing ever since they began in 2010. The fort was severely damaged during the war, but will be a living monument for the future. It is the duty of our entire nation to restore the cultural heritage of war-damaged monuments. One of the successes of this project is that it is being implemented with the involvement and participation of so many stakeholders: all sectors of the government, archaeologists, local people and the army; everyone has contributed, setting an example to many countries in the world. In this sense, Sri Lanka is truly at the forefront of heritage preservation.

After the war, the government of Sri Lanka has paid special attention to promoting the social, economic and cultural situation in the northern and eastern provinces. Thus the Dutch Fort, as national heritage, has become a tool to build up peace in the area.

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# 03 Learning from experiences with natural disasters

## Exploring a culture-oriented solution for communities affected by disaster: The case of earthquake-stricken Kodar village

Mir Wali Shah, PAKISTAN

### Introduction

Armed conflicts and earthquakes both leave long-lasting physical, economic and psychological imprints behind them. The most prime and essential infrastructural component for any human being is their house or shelter, as it provides privacy as well as protection from severe climatic conditions. During both earthquakes and conflicts, there is a great probability of the destruction of the infrastructure. It is obvious that a person, having his house destroyed or damaged due to earthquake or conflict, can never concentrate on the preservation of cultural elements, and neither can such a person show any interest, until and unless his house is rebuilt. So in both cases – i.e. conflicts and natural disasters – we need to provide shelter to the affected communities on an urgent basis, preferably by using locally available, traditional materials. Remedies to such disasters call for profound studies of each and every aspect of a community's structure.

Post-disaster rehabilitation and rejuvenation approaches usually focus on the mere erection of physical infrastructure. There are considerable examples of the relocation of an entire community after an earthquake, whatever the reasons may be. The environmental impacts of these physical redevelopments are commonly overlooked in the name of emergency and urgency. Moreover, this un-thoughtful approach also shakes historically evolved social bonds on the

one hand and the well-established traditional economic setup of communities on the other.

The horrific waves of a major earthquake (7.6 on the Richter scale) upturned much of the northeastern part of Pakistan on 8 October 2005. Casualties counted in this calamity surpassed the figure of 73,000 including 35,000 children. More than 500,000 families were left to mourn the demise of their loved ones under the open sky (Lari 2008a, vii). The Siran Valley, one of the areas badly affected during the great earthquake, is a neglected and lesser-known valley of the Mansehra District. The valley is extremely picturesque, with tall mountain peaks and cascading terraces, but at the same time the affected area suffers from a number of landslides and unsatisfactory, broken access roads.

Kodar, at an elevation of 1,925 m, was one among the villages of the Siran Valley totally devastated during the October 2005 earthquake. After a series of national and international case studies, earthquake-resistant building designs were developed. The rehabilitation work was started using locally available materials and historically tested construction techniques on the footprints of the original village. New Kodar village is in harmony; rather, it reinforces the economic, social, and environmental structure of the community.

Pakistan is a developing country with very limited economic resources, facing major challenges in the form of war against terrorism and natural calamities like floods and earthquakes since the start of the last decade. These natural as well as human-induced disasters have imposed threats to the local heritage, especially in far-flung areas. The economy of these remote areas is based on tourism and heritage preservation, which has been completely shattered due to prevailing uncertain conditions. The morale of the communities living in these areas has obviously been declining and needs immediate remedy in terms of economic uplift and social cohesion. Though the government has, in association with some foreign donors, initiated rehabilitation works in these areas, yet these need the inclusion of heritage conservation for the promotion of tourism in the area.

#### Facts about Kodar

Kodar village is located in the area known as the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan (Fig. 1), towards the border with Afghanistan. Kodar village is divided into two parts, *Kodar Bala* (upper), which counts 92 families (487 people) and *Kodar Pain* (lower), which counts 81 families (462 people) (Shah 2009). According to a survey conducted by the researchers, it was found that 52.7% of the houses in Kodar were occupied by 2 to 5 family members, whereas 43.4% by 6 to 10 and 3.7% by more than 10 family members (Lari 2008b, 2009).

Most of the inhabitants have adopted the cultivation of maize and wheat as their main source of subsistence. People also rear livestock such as cows, buffaloes and goats, and rely on traditional techniques for tilling the soil. A few of the typical local stables of this area withstood the severe shocks of the earthquake.

The particular environment of this area has shaped the culture of the people within it. The remote location of this village prevents frequent and extensive interaction with the outside world, and hence a unified culture seems to exist in the area. This culture has become the identity of this community.

Dwellings in the area were built entirely with local materials such as mud, wood and stone. The local construction methods are called *Dhijji* and *Bhatir*, which comprises wooden bracing and stone laid in mud mortar.

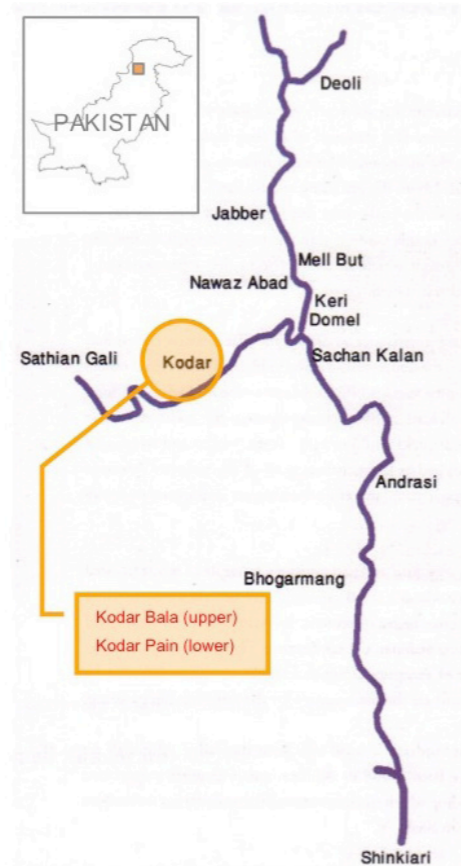


Figure 1. Location map of Kodar village, North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), Pakistan. All images – Credit: Mir Wali Shah. Copyright of the author.



Figure 2. Kodar village, a completely destroyed house.

#### Post-disaster scenario of Kodar village

Though not more than twenty people died in the earthquake, the village was still completely washed away during this huge calamity (Fig. 2). The village's only school (a two-room structure) and the health centre were knocked down, whereas the village mosque suffered from severe damage. The intensity of shocks could be imagined by observing countless uprooted trees immediately after the earthquake. Landslides caused irreparable losses to the water channels, roads and pathways. Losses also occurred to farmlands and livestock, and shook the foundation of the villagers' economic infrastructure. The community's socio-cultural infrastructure was at stake, as almost the entire population became homeless all of a sudden.

#### Rehabilitation efforts

Immediately after the calamity, a rumor spread that the government was determined to take the opportunity to introduce modern technology for new construction so that the backward rural areas could be modernized. Lari (2008a, xi) holds that "with help pouring in from all parts of the world, with new and alien forms being proposed, there was a great danger that instead of utilizing improved traditional construction methods and local materials, new kinds of technology would be introduced. There seemed to be a cultural disaster in the making, since

various alien forms and technologies being proposed would be incompatible with the lifestyle of the people, and may even affect the very value system which had provided the affected communities with cultural strength."

There were some living examples which show that the introduction of alien forms, techniques and materials has added to the sufferings of affected communities. Güçhan (2005) at the end of a similar study concludes that the post-disaster reconstruction project conducted in rural areas of Dinar district has negative aspects from the standpoint of sustainability. The reason for the obvious failure of villages in Dinar was that the physical, socio-cultural and economic factors were not considered during the project's decision-making process (Fig. 3).



Figure 3. Kodar village, historical graveyard. The people of the locality can concentrate on the preservation of such cultural elements only when they have no worries concerning their houses and shelters.

The difficult terrain of Kodar village, aggressive weather conditions, problems of material cartage over long distances, rapidly rising prices of local materials, and unavailability of electric power in the area, as well as the community expectation of handouts, were major challenges to be faced during the rehabilitation process. Still, these hostile characteristics could easily be transformed into opportunities for a sustainable redevelopment of the community (Lari 2008b, 2).



There was a great opportunity to rejuvenate the community through sustainable socioeconomic development and alleviate poverty by devising mechanisms based on local heritage, craft, culture and tradition (Fig. 4).

The problem was to prevent the dissolution of the community after the calamity had ruined their entire physical setup. Parallel to this stake was an opportunity for enhancing social cohesion by strengthening the relevance of culture.



Figure 4. Kodar village. Shelter reconstructed with local materials.

There was a big opportunity for creating a pro-poor, community-based culture and ecotourism for large-scale community benefits. Pro-poor tourism (PPT) is tourism that results in increased net benefits for those less favored. The aim is to develop sources of income based on the different culture, lifestyle and traditions specific to each locality. After facing any disaster, we have to study the skills that have matured in that culture. By observing those skills, we can develop them and as a result overcome poverty. By effectively and systematically utilizing the bead craft of Kodar village, women of the community could be empowered.

#### Practical steps towards rehabilitation

In the case of Kodar village, it was decided to reconstruct earthquake-resistant houses on the same old sites using locally available materials

on the basis of historically evolved construction techniques which had proved to be earthquake resistant during the October 2005 calamity. This was the first step towards rebuilding self-confidence and raising the morale of the affected community (Lari 2008b, 3)

Traditionally, there were two construction techniques being used in the area, which had proved to be earthquake resistant. One was the *Kot Dhiji* method (Fig. 5), and the other was *Bahitter Tarz-e-Tameer* (Fig. 6).

A craft centre was constructed in the village to promote the skills of local women in bead jewellery. Karavan Pakistan, the community and youth outreach program of Heritage Foundation Pakistan, introduced the Destiny Roti Kitchen program (Lari 2008b, 8) to introduce locally cooked maize bread to the outer



Figure 5. Construction process of the Kot Dhiji method using wooden diagonal bracings in walls for reinforcement and earthquake resistance.



Figure 6. Bahitter Tarz-e-Tameer: horizontal wooden elements subdivide the height of the wall and break its monolithic character when it collapses during an earthquake.

world and utilize this local product for a long-term source of income. Solar food dehydrators were installed to ensure the hygienic and nutritional value of dried fruits and vegetables. These were the traditionally and historically evolved socioeconomic features of the Kodar village community, which were effectively exploited to raise both economic status and morale.

Primary schools for boys and girls, and a basic health unit were also constructed in Kodar using local materials and indigenous construction techniques with the active participation of the community. To improve hygiene, household bathrooms were introduced in the village for the first time (Lari 2008b, 11).

#### Conclusion

Redevelopment of Kodar village on the same site using necessary precautionary measures did not disrupt the affiliation of the community with its homeland. Use of local materials, indigenous construction techniques and employment of locally available labor added to community confidence and pride. Hundreds of people once looking for aid from external donors were motivated to effectively use what they had in their hands for their own long-run survival. Health and education facilities were so provided that the community developed a sense of ownership towards all these facilities rather than resisting against them.

During this entire redevelopment and rejuvenation process, the importance of people's link with their past and traditions was never overlooked. This approach culminated in the development of a sustainable community, which started from scratch on the remnants of their completely ruined dwellings.

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# The impact of natural disaster on tangible and intangible cultural heritage: Experience in the Irrawaddy Delta in Myanmar

Kyaw Myo Ko, MYANMAR

## Introduction

People are often displaced during natural disasters, and the consequences and misery are comparable to the impact of armed conflict. They also lose their homes and possessions; experience trauma and depression and are equally in need of protection and assistance. In fact a natural disaster is defined by the United Nations as: “the consequences of events triggered by natural hazards that overwhelm local response capacity and seriously affect the social and economic development of a region” (InterAgency Standing Committee 2006, 8).

Given this context, this article shares personal experiences and challenges in preserving and promoting tangible and intangible cultural heritage, in particular in the field of traditional performing arts. It discusses the experiences and lessons learnt from work undertaken in the delta region of Myanmar, ravaged by Cyclone Nargis in 2008. It highlights what efforts can be made to prevent further damage and restore the traditional skills, knowledge, techniques and culture-related objects that were damaged and destroyed. Disaster management for cultural heritage can be handled differently in each area or country. Therefore my aim here is not only to describe the damage caused by natural disaster but also to share my opinion and experience related to the heritage affected in this instance.

**Pagodas and monasteries and their significance**  
Myanmar is a country rich in historic places and monuments such as pagodas and monasteries.

Pagodas are houses of worship with religious and also communal functions, not restricted to a particular religion (Fig. 1). Pagodas originated in India where sacred relics could be kept safe and venerated.



Figure 1. Novices after cyclone Nargis, Moulmeingyun Township, Irrawaddy Delta, Myanmar. All images – Copyright of the author.

Some are golden and towering structures like the great Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon; others are small and whitewashed, on hilltops or flatlands among green rice paddies and in almost every village. All these places are deeply embedded in Myanmar culture and relate

closely to the performing arts. Every pagoda has an annual festival, and all such festivals are venues for trade fairs, clan gatherings and cultural diversity. In addition, the pagoda plays an important role for artists because it is where theatrical troupes perform. Seasonal festivals, communal alms-giving in certain seasons, family celebrations and novitiate ceremonies continuously take place. Along with these pagodas and monasteries, our performing arts, especially traditional puppetry, play a memorable part in the life of every Buddhist.

Most Buddhism as practiced in Myanmar is mixed up with spirit worship and animism. Animism is a belief that spirits exist and can live in all things, sentient and non-sentient; it is the earliest identifiable form of religion found in Myanmar where it has developed into the cult of the Thirty-seven spirits or Nats, as they are called. This form of animism is closely connected with questions about everyday life, the here and now; little attention is focused on the afterlife.

Folk music, traditional songs and dances also flourish in the pagodas and monasteries, and this cultural heritage still plays a major role in local communities. Many works of art are related to Buddhism, animism and old traditions. Last but not least, all this has an important function for the continuity of intangible cultural heritage. Therefore, both tangible and intangible heritage are an important part of a common past. It is of the utmost importance that these historic places, traditional skills, beliefs, traditions, music, songs, dance, and drama – often unique and irreplaceable – be available not only for the present but for the benefit of posterity (Awareness Raising on Culture and Development in Europe 2008).

## The Irrawaddy Delta ravaged by Cyclone Nargis

Rivers such as the Patheingyi, Pyawon, Bogale and Toe and many other streams flow into the Irrawaddy Delta, which lies in the southwest of Myanmar. The densely populated area is mainly lowland just 3 meters above sea level, with a maximum height of about 300 meters. Due to regular flooding the soil is very fertile, making this vast area important for rice cultivation, with basically two crop seasons a year and agricultural activities year round. While the delta has an important economic function as one of country's largest rice producers, other income sources derive from fishing industries and forestry.

Together with their waterways, the townships are known for a rich and diverse culture due to high numbers of ethnic groups, (e.g., Bamar, Kayin and Mon), making religion and art play an important role. Among the religious and historical places, many theatres still exist and religious lore is portrayed so that the stories can be passed from generation to generation. The communities are actively involved in various religious and theatrical events, even though modern media and telecommunication are still very limited and underdeveloped.

On 2 and 3 May 2008, the Nargis Cyclone was the worst natural disaster ever recorded to strike Myanmar. It devastated the Irrawaddy Delta, killing tens of thousands of people and ruining its infrastructure, human lives and communities. Many survivors remained vulnerable and traumatized, and their livelihoods became uncertain. Among the worst-affected areas were the townships of Moulmeingyun (also known as Mawgyun) and Bogale (also spelled Bogalay), with massive flooding where more than 10,000 people lost their lives. In one small city in Bogale Township, almost 90% of the homes were destroyed.

The number of partially or totally destroyed monasteries probably runs into the thousands. More exact estimates of the damage are difficult to make. One of the reasons is the huge devastated area in the delta where the infrastructure is rudimentary and where people get around in traditional wooden boats with outboard motors.

#### **Emergency response programmes and approaches**

Thanks to The Prince Claus Fund (PCF) from The Netherlands, the Cultural Emergency Response programme (CER) provided emergency relief for cultural heritage damaged and destroyed by Cyclone Nargis, bringing hope and consolation to affected communities. CER initiated a research mission to identify pressing cultural needs and give support to the area. After that, CER supported a number of projects for restoring religious heritage and theatrical infrastructure in the townships of Bogalay and Moulmeingyun (Ko 2008a,b; Prince Claus Fund 2008).

CER sought out a local partner in a position provide reliable information about heritage damage on the ground. Investigations carried out in August-September 2008 resulted in identifying a number of cultural emergency relief actions. The role played by heritage sites as gathering places for the people and their cultural traditions moved CER to provide funds for restoration of the religious and monastic

heritage in the two townships mentioned above. Restoration of such buildings is essential for the continuity of cultural traditions and the daily rituals from which the affected communities draw their strength and identity. In line with this thinking, CER also funded the purchase of equipment and instruments for six orchestras, thereby enabling the continuation of Myanmar's unique puppet theatre tradition.

Overall, through the local partner the project primarily intended to identify: the artists (individuals and groups) and communities affected by the disaster and their needs regarding their culture-related objects, whether contemporary or historical, formal or informal, (e.g., damaged monasteries or any other cultural heritage); the cultural value that those identified objects represent for individuals, groups or communities; and the ways and extent to which (education, coaching) the situation can be stabilized to prevent further damage, and basic repairs implemented in the local context.

As to the artists, we assumed that some were full time and others part time who supported themselves otherwise. Lacking some original records, it was difficult to discover the depth of their troubles. Thanks to the support of township-level theatrical organizations, we were able to verify the most reliable data. No puppets and puppeteers were affected by Cyclone Nargis, although other performing arts groups from the area felt the impact.

The project involved planning meetings with local experts and participants, organizing field trips for data gathering, regular reporting to the PCF and feedback through the project implementation at the community level. The methodology used was designed by the PCF following the general assessment and with the suggestions of the local project team.

By building upon longstanding initiatives with national and international communities, and as a theatre director who had been actively involved in promoting traditional arts and culture, the local partner (author of this article) was fully committed to the project development. Priorities were to: preserve various techniques as existed in traditional theatre performance; promote traditional puppetry as means for ethical and aesthetic education; set up information-sharing networks internationally in promoting and preserving traditional culture and arts; and, facilitate research, educational programmes and training. Overall, the project has met all of the requirements as documented, and the stakeholders and people from every community connected to this project felt that all outstanding items had been satisfactorily addressed.

#### **Selection of locations and goals**

Based on set objectives, various sites were selected to implement the project under the category of artistic related, monasteries and cultural heritage. In Moulmeingyun Township we focused on: restoring the Kanner Monastery; restoring the Kyunlone Kutkar Pagoda, Sabbath and Meditation hall and Buddha statues; rebuilding the theatrical organization office and promoting activities for theatrical support. In Bogalay Township we focused on: restoring the Shin U Pa Goata Shrine; restoring the Koe Myo Nan Spirit House, rebuilding the theatrical organization office and again promoting activities for theatrical support. The projects fell under two main headings: reconstruction of heritage buildings, and theatrical support for restoration of tangible cultural heritage and safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. Project activities began in mid-March 2009 and ended in mid-October 2009.

Here follow brief descriptions of what was done in the two townships and the rationale for the selection of projects.

#### **Restoration of the Kanner Monastery**

The Kanner monastery was primarily provided with a new building in its previous style. The building, situated at the township centre, was used to hold examinations for the monks around the region and for the public community for donation and novitiate ceremonies. The head monk of this monastery is also a chairman of the township-level monk's association. (Such associations are official and legally acknowledged by the government.) The monastery is of particular value to the Maoulmeingyun community and of social significance for the township, not only for religious events but also as the venue for social affairs such as donation ceremonies and other traditions.

#### **Restoration of Kyunlone Kutkar Pagoda, Sabbath and Meditation hall and Buddha statues**

The cyclone damaged most of the Buddha statues in the Sabbath hall from Kyunlone Kutkar Pagoda (Fig. 2). Here, Buddhists receive Buddha's teaching once a week on the Sabbath day. The structures of the distorted pagoda and



Figure 2. Damaged Buddha statues after cyclone Nargis, Moulmeingyun Township, Irrawaddy Delta, Myanmar.

the meditation hall were restored; Buddha statues were repaired and some were also rebuilt or replaced. These activities helped the continuity of religious belief which is of spiritual and social significance for the local community.

### Rebuilding theatrical organization offices

In both townships, the theatrical office buildings were completely rebuilt as part of the proposed plan to support and maintain the intangible cultural heritage of the local community. Theatrical office buildings are significant for future communication to this remote area and supporting a specific community of artists.

### Restoration of the Shin U Pa Goata Shrine

The Shin U Pa Goata Shrine (named after a disciple of Buddha) was completely rebuilt. This shrine is also of spiritual and social significance for the local people since it is the venue for an important ceremony once a year.

### Restoration of the Koe Myo Nan Spirit House

The Koe Myo Nan spirit house was completely rebuilt in the original style: the walls and roofing were repaired; and a wooden stand was made to display the Nat statues. This supports the religious belief of the township people and is of spiritual significance for the local community.

### Theatrical support in the region

Five perfect traditional orchestra sets were produced and delivered to entitled orchestra groups whose musical instruments were lost or damaged. Entitlement was decided by the board of the Myanmar Theatrical Association, township theatrical associations and the project coordinator. Orchestra sets play an important role in maintaining all branches of Myanmar traditional culture, preserving and safeguarding the diversity of intangible cultural heritage which is closely related to artists, musicians and dancers. One of the theatre groups expressed concern with regard to sustaining traditional performing art. For them, it was necessary to replace production-related objects such as a sound box, amplifier and its accessories, curtains and lights. Such activities supported the artistic and social significance for the artists and local communities (Fig. 3).

### Challenges and lessons learnt

The local community of artists and the owners of heritage places were not aware how these projects worked and how they should respond to them. After such devastation, the artist community obviously did not have access to viable financial support for their profession or even means of survival. As there had never been such a large-scale disaster before, the core project team of the Myanmar Theatrical Association also lacked experience in assessment methods for tangible and especially intangible heritage. In addition, telecommunication was a major challenge and there was no public Internet connection in the delta region.

Several factors turned out to be important in achieving positive results. Local trusteeship and community heads played a crucial role in many ways. They could activate and involve the local communities, and they helped together with the stakeholders, not only to assess environmental damage but also to implement the support.

The project activities enhanced the capacity of the participants, and in particular the Myanmar Theatrical Association, to establish collaborative activities to bring about strategies for integrated conservation of tangible and safeguarding of intangible heritage.



Figure 3. Restoration after the Cyclone Nargis, Irrawaddy Delta, Myanmar.

Last but not least, coordination of the different actors in the field, such as local authorities, community heads, trustees, stakeholders, and the Myanmar Theatrical Association, was crucial for a positive outcome.

Facing an underdeveloped and heavily damaged public infrastructure, and changing weather conditions in these areas, payments and project schedules could not always be met, but eventually the set objectives and intended deliverables of the project were successfully achieved. In reaching the goals, social awareness was raised among the local population with regard to the importance of preserving not only tangible but also intangible cultural heritage.

### Conclusions

The traditional cultural community in the delta region truly appreciated the support of the Cultural Emergency Response program of the Prince Claus Fund and the support from the local actors because they had been so demoralized after the devastation wrought by Cyclone Nargis. The people from traditional cultural communities, monks, caretakers and trustees of the buildings concerned were really pleased and also expressed their gratitude and many thanks to the project.

One of the key factors of the success in bridging such opportunities to the local community was collaboration among stakeholders, such as members from the international organizations, Myanmar theatrical associations, artists, monks, heads of the communities and local authorities. They all played an important role in preserving and promoting the tangible and intangible cultural heritage, in particular in the field of Myanmar traditional performing arts and their communities, which can be lost by different means and causes.

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# 04 Preparedness, networks and awareness

## The Finnish National Inventory: Peacetime preparation for the protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict

Minna Pesu, FINLAND

### National inventory of cultural property

Finland is currently implementing the Hague Convention (UNESCO 1954, second protocol 1999) and making peacetime preparations for the protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict. Finland is one of the safest countries in Europe and at present there is no threat of armed conflict, but The Hague Convention and the second protocol stress the importance of peacetime preparations in protecting and safeguarding cultural heritage.

As part of the implementation of the peacetime preparations, Finland is in the process of carrying out a nation-wide inventory of cultural property of national importance to be protected under the Hague Convention. The inventory combines both movable and immovable property – built heritage, archaeological heritage, museums, libraries and archives – to be protected in the event of armed conflict.

These preparations to safeguard cultural heritage in the event of armed conflict can be integrated into the prevention and mitigation of natural disasters, and the Finnish inventory will be used to safeguard cultural property against ordinary civil emergencies (fire and flood hazards, etc.) as well as military threats. Finland is not traditionally prone to natural disasters but according to some studies,

climate change might cause more sudden catastrophes such as storms, rising water level, landslides and flooding (Berghäll and Pesu 2008, 11-12; Kaslegard 2011, 22-23). There is a need to strengthen cooperation between the heritage sector, the rescue services and other sectors and there is already collaboration between the cultural heritage authorities and other sectors on climate-related issues concerning heritage. The new Finnish Rescue Act concerning accident prevention came into effect in July 2011 and The Hague inventory will be a tool by which the rescue services can plan their actions and preparedness measures to safeguard cultural property.

In the process of making the inventory it has been essential to find out how the information on cultural heritage in Finland is already being imported or could be imported to other actors' databases and plans. The question is how to make sure that all relevant information gathered and processed in the heritage sector will be taken into account not only by the defense forces but also the 22 regional rescue departments responsible for rescue services in their areas.

The body responsible for defining cultural property is the National Board of Antiquities. The inventory is being made in cooperation

with the National Archives, the National Library and the National Gallery. A hearing will be arranged about the proposed inventory for the regional heritage authorities. The owners of the cultural property will be informed about the inventory. In the future, the inventory will be updated and reevaluated regularly. The marking of cultural heritage with the Blue Shield emblem according to the Hague Convention has been discussed in Finland but no decision has yet been taken.

#### Criteria – how to define great importance?

The Hague Convention states that the preservation of cultural heritage is of great importance for all peoples of the world and that damage to cultural property belonging to any people means damage to the cultural heritage of all humankind. The Convention mentions examples of different types of cultural property and defines cultural property as being irrespective of origin or ownership (UNESCO 2010).

The Finnish listing is being made according to the selection criterion mentioned in the Hague Convention: *importance*. The problem is how to define importance. In a commentary on The Hague Convention Jiří Toman notes that the concept of “great importance” mentioned in the Convention is subjective and vague and so it is difficult to fix criteria (Toman 1996, 50). In the Finnish inventory process, heritage authorities are evaluating importance case by

case and preparing the rationale for each property in the listing, i.e., stating the historic, cultural historic, artistic and/or scientific importance of the site or collection. The starting point in this is domestic legislation.



Figure 1. The employees' lunch room in the Social Insurance Institution of Finland (KELA) headquarters in Helsinki. Credit: Jonas Malmberg (2010). All images – Copyright of National Board of Antiquities, reproduced with permission.

In the case of immovable property, the starting point in evaluating each site is based on the criteria defined in the *Antiquities Act* (National Board of Antiquities 1963) and the *Act on the Protection of Built Heritage* (Government of Finland 2010): archaeological, architectural and/or technical importance and importance as a symbol of national identity. A long historical continuity and the site's state of preservation are also considered. In the case of built heritage, the preservation of the building's interior is considered as well (Fig. 1).

The importance of movable property is evaluated by considering the age and rarity of the collection, as well as evaluating how the



Figure 2. The Myllymäki croft in Nummi-Pusula features 17 traditional wooden buildings with original furniture and fittings. Most of the buildings date back to the late 19th century. Credit: Soile Tirilä (2003).



Figure 3. The Maritime Centre Vellamo represents both immovable and movable cultural property, as its architecture and collections are both aspects for including this site in the national Hague inventory. Credit: Jussi Tiainen (2008).

collection represents national artistic, scientific or cultural historic heritage. The collections are listed as entities and located by where they are stored.

The proposed inventory represents the diversity of Finnish cultural heritage, for example, in the case of immovable heritage, monuments such as churches, manor houses and public buildings will be over-represented compared to more anonymous residential buildings. Many sites in the inventory representing traditional life and the Finnish building tradition are nowadays open to the public as museums (Fig. 2). A large part of the content of the inventory will date back to the times before the Second World War, which conflicts with the fact that approximately 80 per cent of the country's building stock was created during the past 60 years. However, the younger building stock is considered when making the inventory (Fig. 3). In the future, the heritage of the latter part of the 20th century will be evaluated through the results of a research project on The Built Welfare, which examines post-war built heritage in Finland ([http://www.nba.fi/en/built\\_welfare](http://www.nba.fi/en/built_welfare)).

The inventory of movable heritage covers the national collections of the National Archives,

the National Library, the National Museum, the National Gallery and the Museum of Natural History. These collections are corroborated by other resources. Many archives, libraries and museums are situated in regional administrative centres, which leads to some concentration of listed movable heritage in certain cities and areas. With this reservation, the whole of Finland will be covered in the inventory in geographical terms. In the arctic region, the cultural heritage of the Sámi people (the only official indigenous people in Europe) is evaluated in cooperation with the Sámi Parliament and the Sámi museum Siida (Fig. 4).



Figure 4. The Sallivaara reindeer round-up site in Inari will be proposed for inclusion in the Finnish Hague inventory. Reindeer husbandry is a traditional livelihood of the Sámi people. Credit: Hannu Vallas (1999).

### The relationship between the Hague Convention and Finnish domestic legislation

According to The Hague Convention, cultural property should receive international protection and such protection cannot be effective unless both international and national measures have been taken to organize it in times of peace (UNESCO 2010). Adequate administrative measures for safeguarding and respect for cultural property at the national level are being discussed in Finland and are referred to below. One part of this discussion is the question of the relationship between the national Hague inventory and official domestic legal protection.

Only a small part of Finnish cultural heritage is officially protected or owned and managed by public authorities. The primary means to protect built cultural heritage in Finland is through land-use planning as prescribed in the *Land Use and Building Act* (Government of Finland 1999). There are no statistics about the number of sites, buildings and cultural landscapes protected by the Act. In addition, there is specific legislation for built monuments and archaeological sites that altogether covers approx. 2000 buildings and/or built sites and approx. 26,700 archaeological sites.

The responsibility for libraries, archives and museums to conserve movable heritage is prescribed in domestic legislation. Apart from the *Act and Decree on Restrictions to the Export of Cultural Objects* (National Board of Antiquities 1999a,b) which applies to exporting movable property outside the country, there is no domestic legislation to protect movable heritage. There is a perceived challenge concerning important collections that are privately owned. Privately owned movable property will not be included in the Hague inventory because of the lack of tools for domestic legal protection.

Not all publicly owned heritage institutions such as museums, archives and libraries and the thousands of officially protected sites of immovable heritage are included in the national Hague inventory. Neither will the Finnish inventory of cultural property include large built environments. This is due to the effectiveness (or lack thereof) of possible safeguarding measures and also to avoid any situation where the concept of military necessity written into the Hague Convention would require a waiver of the obligation to respect the cultural property (Boylan 1993). The only exception to the general rule of avoiding large geographical areas in the inventory consists of the Finnish World Cultural Heritage sites, which have been reviewed and included in the inventory. The Hague Convention of 1954 cannot be applied to natural sites.

### Protection and preparing for risks

Defining cultural property to be protected under the Hague Convention is only one part of implementing the Convention in peacetime. The second protocol mentions the planning of emergency measures against fire or structural collapse, preparation for the removal of movable cultural property or the provision for in situ protection and the designation of competent authorities for the safeguarding of cultural property (UNESCO 2010, 47).

After the inventory is compiled, a vulnerability assessment should be made for each site and collection. In addition to pinning down the types of threats to cultural properties and taking the necessary preparedness measures, there is also a need for documentation, especially as climate change might increase the pace of destruction caused by climatic disasters (Berghäll and Pesu 2008, 24; Kaslegard 2011, 38). The first step could be to make a survey of the existing documentation of the sites listed, as well as of the inventories of movable heritage.

Before the Finnish inventory is ratified, the owners of the sites will all be contacted and informed about The Hague Convention, domestic legislation and the overall importance of taking preparedness measures as part of the comprehensive, overall safeguard and management of the sites. According to the Finnish *Rescue Act* (Government of Finland 2011), the owner and holder of cultural property is ultimately responsible for its protection. Coordination between the owners' responsibilities and the authorities' tasks will be a challenge. The aim is to provide the owners of the sites further information about issues such as fire risk prevention.

To ensure that all relevant authorities are able to import the cultural property data to their databases, some key information is gathered. Every site listed will include identification information from the land register and the Building and Dwelling Register (BDR). In the case of archaeological heritage, the geographical information will also provide the coordinates. In the future, it is important to consider in a more comprehensive manner how to combine all relevant information about a certain area or site with a suitable disaster management system or process. In Finland

there is a project going on to unify the governmental information system.

General information on the Convention is included in the training and education given to defense forces staff, conscripts and peacekeepers (Ministry of Education 2008) and there is already a guidebook for Finnish professionals working in disaster situations (Ahoniemi and Perähuhta 1999). Still, more education and training material is needed, as well as closer cooperation between different administrative sectors.

### Conclusion

Advance planning is essential for the proper care and maintenance of any cultural property, and this planning is the shared responsibility of the owners of the sites, defense forces and fire and rescue officials, as well as heritage professionals. All disaster-response authorities and individuals should be aware of any property's heritage values and qualities in order to limit damage caused by either climatic or anthropogenic disasters and avoid further damage caused by actions taken during and after the event.

### About the author

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# Risk Preparedness and heritage management in times of sociopolitical crisis: The role of experts

Mohammad Beiraghi, IRAN

## Introduction

During ICCROM's International course on First Aid to Cultural Heritage in Times of Conflict (FAC10) held in Rome in 2010, various difficulties in the protection of cultural heritage in conflict zones and in times of crisis were discussed. Apart from many natural disasters and some biological and environmental causes of deterioration of cultural resources, there are human causes of demolition that arise for sociopolitical reasons. Such factors are quite different from the consequences of ordinary human activities, such as air pollution, traffic or improper management of heritage resources.

One of the most destructive factors that can threaten cultural heritage emerges from a country's instability during civil unrest. When any given country experiences internal instability, the international bodies responsible for heritage protection may be unable to enter the country or cannot contact governmental units to assess risks and save cultural properties. In such situations, things can happen very quickly. Protection of cultural heritage can be of low priority when human lives are at risk and administrative sectors such as police, heritage guards or rescue services are unable to act properly.

Another aspect of the protection of heritage resources during sociopolitical crisis is the

vandalism and looting of cultural heritage in conflict areas by the very people to whom this heritage belongs. This was seen during the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, and more recently, during uprisings in Northern Africa and the Middle East, where reports are emerging with regard to Egypt (Alexander 2011), Bahrain (Carey 2011), Yemen (Al-Alayaa and Fleishman 2011), Syria (Sabbagh 2011) and Libya (Association of the National Committees of the Blue Shield 2011).

A closer look at these threats reveals that political and diplomatic means for protection of cultural heritage are often disabled when a country is in sociopolitical crisis. Therefore, there should be a more immediate way to foster expert information exchange, based on local and domestic potentials.

## Sociopolitical crisis; a risk in protection of cultural heritage properties and the role of experts

During the FAC10 course, Mounir Bouchenaki, Director-General of ICCROM, presented some difficulties in protection of cultural heritage in conflict zones such as Dubrovnik, Afghanistan and Iraq, and mentioned some critical points in trying to protect cultural heritage resources in these cases (Bouchenaki 2010). For example, in the case of the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas in 2001 in Afghanistan, he explained



the difficulties of identifying political channels by which to negotiate with non-state actors such as the Taliban. Mr. Bouchenaki explained that although UNESCO was informed in advance about the intention to destroy the statues, it took some time to establish contact. The destruction of this World Heritage Site highlighted some of the limitations of international organizations in attempting to resolve such issues using political solutions.

Perhaps a network of local experts who recognized the value of heritage resources could assist in rapidly establishing channels of communication that may not be available to the international community. In fact, one participant in the FAC course from the National Museum of Afghanistan suggested that the protection of cultural heritage sites would be more efficient if it were possible for international actors such as UNESCO to establish contact with local experts instead of relying on political administrations (M. F. Rahimi, personal communication, 2010). In fact, in a sociopolitical crisis, if extremist groups are threatening heritage for religious reasons, political efforts would be ineffective and might actually increase the risk of an attack. Instead, local experts could more easily go through the problems, find the right actors, try to solve the

conflict and perhaps finally succeed in safeguarding the heritage.

Past experiences in applying international instruments such as conventions or recommendations to avoid risks to cultural heritage confirm their importance for the protection of heritage resources in time of crisis, but also highlight some of their limitations. They must by definition rely on intergovernmental mechanisms rather than on the individual agency of professionals.

#### **The current situation**

Political and social crises have occurred in several Middle-Eastern and African countries in recent decades. Revolutions have taken place and people have suffered from unrest and domestic and international wars. Every time that there is a potential sociopolitical crisis in these countries, one can envisage problems and threats to cultural heritage resources as well.

Apart from many problems of instability in countries during civil unrest, there has also been a pretext for people to destroy and rob museums and heritage sites. There is a huge gap between the regimes – which have controlled cultural heritage as a political tool to create a glorious historical background for themselves – and the people who find cultural heritage something they feel does not belong to them. This gap makes heritage properties vulnerable because people see looting and vandalism as a way to express their anger and frustration at their governments. The problem is latent in Iran, for example, and in any possible or similar situation; it can cause severe problems to cultural heritage, both sites and objects. For example, in Bahrain, during the 2011 uprising, the population damaged government property. At the same time, the Bahraini authorities were accused of allegedly destroying mosques and other religious gathering places

(Carey 2011). In such situations of heightened tension, it is difficult to imagine how the public could organize an effective and reliable protective response. The problem has manifold roots: political injustice, inequality, poverty, dictatorship and religious convictions, among others.

Discussing the issue with some experts in Iran has shown the same problem that threatens heritage resources. The Iranian Cultural Heritage Organization has been under government control for many years. During a sociopolitical crisis, it would be difficult for any governmental body to effectively protect cultural heritage, as their first priority would be to resolve the political instability. In severe conditions, such as in Libya during the events of 2011, in Yemen, Iraq and Afghanistan, it may be difficult or unfeasible to gain access to government bodies – especially in cases where the population is opposing the authorities.

Furthermore, one could also call into question the effectiveness of international professional organizations such as ICOMOS, ICOM, and Blue Shield. Due to their international status, and because their membership is composed mainly of individual, nongovernmental experts, their organizational capacity to act effectively in a time of crisis would be limited. For example, should one of these bodies attempt to warn another country or inform news agencies about cultural heritage under threat, these actions might be interpreted as political interference and expose them to a political or military response.

#### **Proposed expert network**

The basis of risk preparedness should be raising public awareness. It is also important to organize social actions among heritage professionals instead of governmental measures. In this case, a group of experts could act effectively because:

- They can be involved within public activities and try to raise public awareness in protection of cultural heritage;
- Due to their profession, they can carry out risk assessments and evaluate them in order to implement the best means of protection;
- They are familiar with, or may be members of, international organizations in protection of cultural properties. Therefore, they can inform those organizations about critical conditions and act for them in an efficient and practical process.

As a concrete solution to the above-mentioned considerations, the author proposes the launching of an online database called Cultural Heritage Blue Umbrella Network (CHBUN) [www.chbun.com](http://www.chbun.com) (currently under construction), which would enable professionals in heritage protection to share their problems, inform each other about the latest conflicts, and find solutions to specific threats. This network could act as an association between experts all over the world. It means whenever a conflict happens these experts can quickly become involved in protection activities and can be contacted by international bodies for any possible protective actions towards cultural heritage resources. The core members of this network are people who are interested in heritage safeguarding by profession. They can act as an emergency unit in times of internal crisis inside their countries.

The CHBUN database will be the platform for sharing information on sites that are threatened but it also serves as a platform for sharing experiences to protect cultural heritage and finding professionals that are able to evaluate and assess damage on site. This network is quite different from other social networks like Facebook, which are designed for exchanging common and public information. In contrast, this database for experts will be a

rapid reaction tool that needs highly defined members for this remarkable objective of heritage protection. Whenever a conflict happens in one region, network participants would be available to evaluate the event and give a preliminary assessment. This way, all the relevant information is disseminated efficiently and immediately. In addition, experts in this network are available across the world to solve the problem.

Alongside the database, the author proposes the establishment of the CHBUN nongovernmental organization (NGO). Its role would be very different from intergovernmental organizations such as UNESCO or ICCROM, or from NGOs such as ICOMOS or ICOM, which work directly with the countries' governments, and in extreme situations might not be able to do their task properly because of the political factors mentioned above. The idea is that the members would have no direct connection to their governments in order to do real risk assessments for protection of cultural heritage. The main components of this network are the NGO members. The problem is to have some international protection for their work and contribution as there could be some threats from their own countries in times of conflict, especially sociopolitical crises. Therefore,

CHBUN could work in collaboration with inter-governmental bodies such as UNESCO through special agreements, and perhaps seek their financial support. However, the author believes that it would be preferable to fund CHBUN's operations through donations or the private sector to maintain its ability to act independently.

#### Conclusions

Study of recent conflict situations confirms that during sociopolitical crises where the population opposes governments, heritage resources encounter some major threats, for example:

- Public ignorance about heritage values and protection of heritage properties;
- Instability of regimes, making protection of heritage properties less important in comparison with political issues;
- People's intention to show their opposition to their governments by looting museums and destroying heritage properties that they think belong to regimes and not to them;
- Limitations of international bodies like UNESCO, ICOMOS, ICOM and similar institutions, during the crisis when their national committees cannot act properly because of instability of the country or due to their structure which is considered unreliable by the regimes.

Therefore, there is a need for an official experts' network that can act in protection of heritage resources. As the members of this network would each be delivering on-site or near-site information and as they would be able to share this information internationally and get the benefit of a wider community and its resources, the network's reaction time is another important factor. There would be no need to find experts and colleagues on the ground when disaster or conflict strikes, as the connections would already be known and they could be easily contacted. This rapidity makes the

network a practical tool for safeguarding heritage since in crisis, especially sociopolitical conflicts, everything is unpredictable and destruction can happen very quickly.

#### About the author

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# Proposal for a training course for military personnel on cultural heritage awareness

Ismaila Diatta, SENEGAL

## Introduction

Since the 1970s, Africa has suffered from many conflicts, with grim results. Often, such conflicts are between national armed forces and dissident factions. They can originate from various causes: flawed election processes in some countries; concentration of power in the hands of a minority sharing the property of the state; poor recruitment policy for public administration; neglect of income-producing sectors such as agriculture; poor geographical distribution of businesses causing rural exodus; or on a wider social level, the uneven treatment of ethnic and religious minorities.

All these factors lead to open conflict, causing massive population displacements to calmer, milder areas, as well as the frequent bombing and shelling that destroy cultural artefacts and heritage institutions.

Contingents of international organizations working for peace, such as the United Nations (UN) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) can generally bring about peace only after severe destruction has already occurred.

In my experience in the Senegalese Army, having served on peacekeeping missions for the UN, ECOWAS and the African Union in

Rwanda, Côte d'Ivoire, Darfur and Liberia, I have witnessed the destruction of heritage first hand, time and time again. Military training here in Senegal or in other armies of West Africa does not take into account the protection of cultural heritage, even if the main missions of the armed forces include the protection of persons and their property. This article briefly describes a current project that aims to create a military heritage network of army staff made aware of the importance of cultural heritage, and set up a school at sub-regional level to train officers and commanding units in cultural heritage protection.

## The situation

The situation in many African countries is dramatic. The constant wars have led to unprecedented political and financial crises. In the Middle East and Northern Africa, popular movements against established regimes have begun to gain ground. Some heads of state are being forced to leave power, as was the case recently in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya. In sub-Saharan Africa, the situation is somewhat different. Here, conflict amongst different factions within the population has raged in Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, to mention a few. The social instability draws its source from political, religious and cultural

ideology. In Nigeria, for example, hundreds of dead have been counted, as well as burned villages and massive population displacement following disputes between Muslims and Christians. More than vandalism, here the destruction of cultural heritage is conscious and intentional because it constitutes a symbol of the identity and values of the Other.

Indeed, all over the world, cultural property, seen as a symbol of the identity of an ethnic group or nation, is endangered when one wants to deny its existence or prove its weakness. This was precisely the case in Iraq with the destruction of the Al-Askariyya in Samarra shrine for Shiites a few meters from the temple of the twelfth Imam where believers come on pilgrimage. In the words of Leturcq (2006) "heritage is affected in its essence as heritage – as a legacy belonging to the past of the Other, which one tries to damage or even deny" [author's translation].

In other cases, some heritage sites become military bases during a conflict, or hiding places for combatants. In the fury of war, these sites can be bombed or destroyed by fire.

Military personnel, who are responsible for protecting people and property, are generally not aware of the importance of objects and monuments in community cultural life. Furthermore, dissident groups might ignore international conventions, agreements or treaties focusing on human rights, as we see in the news on a regular basis. They can also occupy heritage sites and establish their position to shield themselves from the direct fire of the national army. Dissident groups can be quick to retaliate and might even resort to bombing these heritage sites or places of worship, which are supposedly protected by the conventions of war.

Tragic events occurred in Liberia in 2003, where the National Museum was severely looted following a grenade explosion (Gordon 2009; Anon 2005), or in Sierra Leone, where many churches and mosques were burned to the ground in 1999 (Turay n.d.). In Côte d'Ivoire, the Museum of Civilizations was looted recently during the battle for Abidjan (James 2011) because of bombings that occurred close by, since the museum is located within the headquarters of the General Staff of the army. Finally, the Stele of Metera, close to the town of Senafe in Eritrea, was destroyed by bombing during the Ethiopian military occupation (Libsequal 2010).

## Proposed project to raise awareness of army general staff

The military is one of the main actors in a conflict. That is why it is so important to raise army awareness of the importance of heritage so they can protect it during a conflict. I have already conducted short workshops for military personnel in Dakar (Figs. 1-3) as part of the 12th International University Course in Preventive Conservation in the Museums, Archives and Libraries of sub-Saharan Africa held at the *École du Patrimoine Africain*, in Porto-Novo, Benin (<http://epa-prema.net/>). Now that I have completed that course and the FAC course at ICCROM, I would like to take these activities one step further. As a pilot project, the idea is to use the mobile museum from the Senegalese Army Museum (Fig. 4) to tour the country and visit different army barracks. A giant screen will be used to show the destruction of wealth caused by military shelling in previous conflicts so they can draw their own conclusions and think to defend the heritage in a combat zone. Also planned are radio and television broadcasts, as well as the creation of a military heritage network that brings together countries of the region, such as Mali, Benin, Togo and Burkina Faso. After the pilot project, there may be a possibility to



Figures 1-3. Students in the cultural awareness training organized in Dakar conducted as part of an enquiry into knowledge about heritage within the armed forces (Diatta 2011). All images – Credit: Ismaila Diatta. Copyright of General Staff of Senegalese Army, reproduced with permission.

organize further training activities at the sub-regional level.

As a didactic tool for training military contingents departing on UN missions, I have devised (2011, 57) a list of ten basic recommendations to enhance protection of cultural property:

1. It is your duty to respect and safeguard cultural heritage;
2. Never direct your fire towards clearly listed heritage buildings and sites, except in cases of “military necessity;”
3. Identify and protect places of worship, of flora and fauna;
4. Refrain from criminal acts: theft, looting or vandalism;
5. Monitor cultural property housed in a shelter or listed in the “International Register of Cultural Property under Special Protection;”
6. Do not enter national or international heritage institutions without prior authorization;
7. If possible, establish contact with those responsible for cultural heritage in the conflict zone;
8. Every time a cultural object is seized, check its inventory number and alert the competent authorities (INTERPOL, special brigade, etc.) to verify whether the object belongs to a museum;
9. Collaborate with, and support the work of, the special brigade appointed to monitor cultural objects.
10. Make a progress report after each mission to protect the heritage.



Figure 4. Museobus traveling museum of the Senegalese Military Museum, managed by the author. To be used for cultural heritage awareness training in army barracks.

I propose to include cultural heritage awareness training within the already quite intensive training received by deploying military personnel. In this proposed programme, there would be three different tracks; one for officers, another for non-commissioned officers (officers who have not been given a “commission,” i.e., a formal appointment) and finally, one for non-commissioned members (enrolled in the armed forces but not an officer).

The training for officers and non-commissioned officers would begin with a basic introduction to the concept of heritage and defining what is cultural, natural, tangible or intangible heritage. Then, the programme would proceed with general information on cultural and natural sites, and on national and international bodies for the protection of cultural heritage. This would lead into discussions of the various agreements, conventions and treaties governing the protection of cultural heritage in times of conflict. Afterwards, the focus would shift to the more practical matters of mapping listed heritage sites, and planning and developing protection strategies for objects, monuments and sites. All these activities would be complemented with didactic visits to sites and cultural institutions. For non-commissioned members, the training would be basically the same, but would omit the more practical modules on mapping listed heritage sites, and on planning and developing protection strategies. All three tracks would end with a final evaluation exercise such as a simulation and group discussion.

#### Conclusion

All these initiatives can contribute to implementing synergy in heritage protection.

Senegalese soldiers aided by this cultural heritage awareness training would be able to defend heritage regardless of the conflict. The Senegalese army brigade, made up of gendarmes, could establish monitoring of cultural objects. This brigade would have elements in the ports, airports and border crossings to interdict the illicit exportation of objects. Of note also is that West African rebellion is gaining ground and sometimes there are rebel factions that occupy the sites protected by conventions and compel the people to flee. This is why awareness campaigns should be organized at any level before the conflict to anticipate crises and massive destruction of heritage, which is less known to the military.

The Senegalese army’s directive for information and publications is to increase radio and television programmes, so it would be essential not only to talk about heritage protection, especially during armed conflict, but also to fight the illicit traffic of cultural property and adhere to the conventions that protect it.

In short, awareness of military knowledge and heritage protection is one of the flagship projects of the Museum of Armed Forces of Senegal in order to ensure that the military is able to act as the best first line of defense against the destruction of cultural heritage during conflict. The remaining question is whether this goal can be achieved, despite the absence of political and administrative will.

Awareness raising has a purpose so long as wars continue to damage cultural property and so long as the International Criminal Court does not systematically persecute military officers who destroy cultural heritage in times

of conflict, as happens for leaders and high-ranking officials who have committed crimes against humanity.

#### About the author

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## Further reading and online resources\*

Join the Facebook group created by the participants of the FAC course!  
<http://www.facebook.com/groups/209526225769336/>

#### Useful resources (open access)

##### **Conservation, emergency preparedness and disaster response**

CCI Notes (Canadian Conservation Institute): <http://www.cci-icc.gc.ca/publications/notes/index-eng.aspx>

Conserv-O-Grams (National Parks Service, USA): [http://www.nps.gov/museum/publications/conservo-gram/cons\\_toc.html](http://www.nps.gov/museum/publications/conservo-gram/cons_toc.html)

Disaster preparedness and response (Conservation On-line): <http://cool.conservation-us.org/bytopic/disasters/>

Resources for Disaster Planning and Response (Heritage Preservation, USA): <http://www.heritagepreservation.org/programs/TFresources.html>

Protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict, 1956 (UNESCO): <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0007/000712/071205eo.pdf>

Handbook on emergency procedures (ICOM-ICMS): <http://www.icom-icms.org/doc/English.pdf>

Collections theft response procedures (Getty Conservation Institute, USA): [http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications\\_resources/pdf\\_publications/theftresponse.pdf](http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/pdf_publications/theftresponse.pdf)

Civil Affairs Arts, Monuments and Archives Guide 2005 (US Army): [http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/army/gta41-01-002\\_arts\\_monuments\\_and\\_archives.pdf](http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/army/gta41-01-002_arts_monuments_and_archives.pdf)

Under Lock and Key? Collection readiness and response in times of conflict (IIC): <http://www.iiconservation.org/node/1232>

##### **Personal safety and security**

Various resources on personal safety for field work in high-risk areas: <http://patronusanalytical.com/page11/page11.html>

Fieldwork in hazardous areas (Hilhorst and Bram Jansen): <http://www.disasterstudies.wur.nl/NR/rdonlyres/23657A36-F37E-424E-8869-3E89380588F7/34608/Fieldmanualcompressed.pdf>

##### **Real-time information on humanitarian crises**

ReliefWeb: <http://reliefweb.int/>

HEWSweb (Humanitarian Early Warning Service): <http://www.hewsweb.org/hp/>

AlertNet: <http://www.trust.org/alertnet/>

GDACS (The Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System): <http://www.gdacs.org/>

\* ICCROM and MiBAC do not assume responsibility for information in any form found in these resources.

IRIN (Integrated Regional Information Networks): <http://www.irinnews.org/Theme.aspx?theme=NAT>

CATNAT (Catastrophes Naturelles, French): [http://www.catnat.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=category&id=16&Itemid=21](http://www.catnat.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=category&id=16&Itemid=21)

SATCAweb (Sistema de Alerta Temprana para Centroamérica, Spanish): <http://www.satcaweb.org/alertatemprana/inicio/alertatemprana.aspx>

### International conventions, treaties and declarations

#### **UNESCO conventions**

The 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two (1954 and 1999) Protocols: Basic texts. Paris: UNESCO. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001875/187580e.pdf>

Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property 1970 (UNESCO): [http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=13039&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13039&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage 1972 (UNESCO): <http://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext>

#### **Fact sheets and information kits**

1954 Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its Protocols (ICRC): <http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/misc/5lwjp5.htm>

Protect cultural property in the event of armed conflict (UNESCO): <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001386/138645e.pdf>

The Fight Against the Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Objects - The 1970 Convention: Past And Future (UNESCO): <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001916/191606E.pdf>

#### **International Humanitarian Law (IHL)**

The Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols: <http://www.icrc.org/eng/war-and-law/treaties-customary-law/geneva-conventions/index.jsp>

The domestic implementation of International Humanitarian Law: a manual (International Committee of the Red Cross): <http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/publication/p4028.htm>

International humanitarian law: answers to your questions (International Committee of the Red Cross): <http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/publication/p0703.htm>

#### **Others**

Treaty on the Protection of Artistic and Scientific Institutions and Historic Monuments (Roerich Pact). Washington, 15 april 1935. <http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/FULL/325?OpenDocument>

Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects 1995 (UNIDROIT): <http://www.unidroit.org/english/conventions/1995culturalproperty/main.htm>

Declaration concerning the Intentional Destruction of Cultural Heritage 2003 (UNESCO): [http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=17718&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=17718&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

### Websites

Museum SOS: <http://museum-sos.org/>

ICBS (International Committee of the Blue Shield): <http://icom.museum/what-we-do/programmes/museums-emergency-programme/international-committee-of-the-blue-shield.html>

ANCBS (Association of National Committees of the Blue Shield): <http://ancbs.org/>

ICOM-ICMS (International Committee on Museum Security): <http://www.icom-icms.org/>

Prince Claus Fund's Cultural Emergency Response (CER): <http://www.princeclausfund.org/en/programmes/cultural-emergency-response>

Global Heritage Fund: <http://globalheritagefund.org/>

CRIC Identity and Conflict: Cultural Heritage and the Re-construction of Identities after Conflict: <http://www.cric.arch.cam.ac.uk/index.php?id=12>

WATCH (World Association for the Protection of Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage During Times of Armed Conflict): <http://www.eyeculture.net/>

PreventionWeb: <http://www.preventionweb.net/english/>

### Blogs

Culture Conflict Cooperation: <http://www.cultureconflictcooperation.com/>

Safe Corner – Cultural Heritage in Danger: comments, corrections, rants and raves: <http://safe-corner.savingantiquities.org/>

Cultural Heritage Law (Lawyers' Committee for Cultural Heritage Preservation): <http://culturalheritagelaw.blogspot.com/>

Cultural Property & Archaeology Law: <http://cultural-propertylaw.wordpress.com/>