

The Cairo Declaration
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Recognizing the continuing threat to our economic, cultural well-being and national security as a result of antiquities looting, trafficking, and destruction by criminal networks and extremist groups of our cultural property that is either registered, unregistered or submerged, the Governments of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Sudan and Sultanate of Oman agreed at a Ministerial Conference held in Cairo on the 13th and 14th of May 2015, to launch immediate joint efforts to stand against the abovementioned threats.

The Middle East and Northern African region is home to the beginnings of human civilization due to its long and rich history. Criminal networks and terrorists groups have systematically looted historic sites and profited from the sales of these antiquities in international black markets. In addition, as a means to intimidate local populations, these looters have intentionally destroyed historical relics. We deplore their actions, and view this as a crime against human civilization.

In light of the above, the participating governments attending this conference have agreed on the necessity of the following actions:

- Launch a Cultural Racketeering Task Force consisting of a senior representative from each country to coordinate regional and international efforts to protect cultural property and prevent smuggling and repatriate stolen artifacts.
- Establish an International Advisory Committee which will provide advice and support for the task force on ways to fight cultural racketeering.
- Initiate an awareness campaign in demand countries to discourage purchases of looted antiquities.

- Consider the possibilities to start negotiations with international partners on a “Regional Cultural Memorandum of Understanding” which would lead to the ban of dealing in looted antiquities.
- Raise awareness campaigns aiming to protect cultural property against illegal digging, smuggling and dealing, while implementing harsher sanctions on those who attempt such illegal activities.
- Study the possibilities of establishing an independent regional Anti-laundering Agency that will cooperate with the competent international agencies to help monitor and halt the trade of antiquities.

It was agreed on to hold other conferences with the concerned Middle East and Northern African region countries and other governments interested in joining this Initiative against antiquities looting.