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HERITAGE

Guidelines for COVID-19



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HERITAGE

Guidelines for COVID-19

Iraq, Libya, Syria, Yemen

By

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PART 2

COUNTRY OVERVIEWS

Heritage Guidelines for COVID-19

YEMEN – COUNTRY OVERVIEW

Introduction

This chapter sets out the situation of heritage and heritage management in Yemen as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It will begin by describing the situation, before suggesting advice for heritage staff responding to the crisis, with links to further resources. It also contains specific sections on the effects on archaeological sites, and museums and libraries, and advice on their management, as well as specific advice on digital tools. It is primarily aimed at heritage workers, or those interested in the effects of the pandemic on the heritage of these areas.

The United Nations has called the situation in Yemen the worst humanitarian crisis on earth. Since the start of the war in 2014, thousands of civilians have been killed and injured, more than 3.6 million people have been internally displaced, over 80% of Yemen's population, around 22.4 million (2018), is now dependent on humanitarian aid, and ten million people are a step away from famine and seven million are malnourished. The devastating conflict has set back Yemen's human development by more than 20 years. Yemen now faces the COVID-19 pandemic. The current COVID-19 crisis causes serious damage to the country's fragile prospects for development and effective humanitarian response. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that, under some scenarios, half of Yemen's population of 30 million could be infected and more than 40,000 could die. War-ravaged Yemen is divided between the Saudi-backed government based in the south in Aden (Government in Aden) and the opposition, the Iran-aligned Houthi group in the north (Government in Sana'a).

Ultimately, the biggest impediment to the fight against the coronavirus remains Yemen's horrific conflict. In this respect, the recent Houthi hostilities in the Marib governorate and the broader violent conflict in the south are especially concerning. The secession of the Southern Transitional Council from the Government in Aden, a group that is heavily influenced by Salafists affiliated with the United Arab Emirates, and the latest campaign of violence from Houthi forces only complicate UN efforts to tackle the coronavirus outbreak and reverse the efforts towards ending this war. The United Nations humanitarian chief has warned that Yemen will fall off the cliff without massive financial support. The country has many people starving to death, succumbing to COVID-19, dying of cholera, and watching their children die because they haven't been immunized for killer diseases. Now, the coronavirus pandemic is threatening Yemen's civilization, and cultural heritage both tangible and intangible.

Health

Basic data

First case Aden: April 10, a person from Hadramout.

First case Sana'a (Houthi): May 5, a Somali refugee

Most affected regions: urban areas

Total cases per August 17, 2020¹

- Confirmed cases 1873
- Fatalities 531
- Recovered 1015

These numbers are not considered to be very reliable. For recent data see below in ***Resources:*** [Daily updates](#) and [Other COVID-19 resources on Yemen](#) - *World Health Organisation* - Dynamic Dashboard for Yemen.

Underreporting

Yemen was one of the last countries to confirm a case of the coronavirus, and now the danger of a second wave of infections is not far away. The numbers of confirmed cases, fatalities, and recovered patients since the outbreak of COVID-19 are not very reliable due to the lack of testing and equipment; many cases are not detected and people die at home in silence. The conflict itself also causes underreporting as in some places it is dangerous to reach a testing facility. The WHO confirms the significant underestimation of the outbreak, which could further hinder efforts to get supplies needed to contain the virus into Yemen. Houthis face heavy criticism for suppressing information about the number of COVID-19 cases and fatalities in areas under their control. They have refused to release positive test results. Medical staffers said they are under surveillance and can't speak about what they see inside health centers. Doctors and local health officials believe many people are dying undocumented of COVID-19 in their homes.

Misinformation

Unfortunately, poor media reports and lack of trust in public institutions make it challenging to deliver messaging to bring about behavioural change. Yemen ranks 168 out of the 180 countries on the 2019 World Press Freedom index. False narratives surrounding the coronavirus undermine important preventative measures. In Yemen, information can easily be manipulated by actors seeking to further political and economic goals. All sides in the conflict demonstrate indifference towards the victims, putting militia interests above civilian concerns. Warring parties are also all too eager to hide suspected COVID-19 cases in the hope that low numbers will show their capability to contain the pandemic in their respective areas (see for more information at ***Resources*** [Other resources](#) *WHO* -About COVID-19, COVID-19 - Questions and answers, and Myth busters).

Health infrastructure

While the battles continue to rage, half of the country's hospitals and clinics have been destroyed or closed. Only half the country's health facilities are fully functioning, and power cuts are common. The routine destruction and repeated occupation of health care facilities, as well as the killing and wounding of medical workers, has significantly weakened Yemen's health system. A press report shows that 18% of Yemen's 333 districts do not have a single doctor, and health personnel have not received salaries for more than 2 years. There is a shortage of medicine, testing equipment, and personal protection equipment (PPE), and there are only two testing sites, one of them run by Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) in southern Yemen. Yemen is conducting just 31 tests for COVID-19 per one million people, ranking it among the world's lowest-capacity countries.

People are coming to hospitals too late in order to save money, and many more people are not coming at all - they are dying at home. Many health facilities have reported staff not showing up for work due to the lack of personal protection equipment, causing hospitals to close down. Staff also report having to turn people away because they do not have enough medical supplies. Masks were already in short supply in most parts of Yemen, despite massive efforts from the United Nations agencies to fill the gaps. With prices shooting up, it became impossible for many Yemenis to buy masks or other personal protection equipment; civilians cannot afford them, and aid organizations have a hard time procuring them.

If the simplest and most basic prevention equipment is not available, there's no telling how fast and far the virus can spread. In addition, reports indicate that after the siege imposed by the Houthi militias in Yemen's south western Taiz region, the health sector is on the verge of collapse. The warring parties are also using the pandemic as a pretext to make money. In some areas, they use the excuse of pandemic prevention to extort money from civilians who are hoping to be allowed to pass through local checkpoints. Adding to the health crisis is the short supply of water. More than 80% of the population lacks access to clean drinking water. Even soap, which is one of the cheapest and most effective tools to fight the spread of the virus, is unobtainable by half of all families due to the cost.

Conditions in detention facilities in Yemen are abysmal. They are overcrowded and unsanitary, and detainees have already witnessed the spread of contagious diseases. Health care is routinely not available and, in some cases, denied to detainees, while prison systems do not have the capacity, medical supplies, or resources to respond to COVID-19. Clearly, with the coronavirus outbreak, the disintegrating country is not even close to being able to deal properly with the pandemic. In particular, the appalling conditions and the rapid spread of coronavirus in detention facilities form acute health risks, especially for the Bahá'í detainees.² See for more information at ***Resources*** [Other COVID-19 resources on Yemen](#).

Additional complications

International aid agencies believe the coronavirus has been circulating in Yemen since March, but doctors might have missed it, in part because of other tropical diseases following the flooding that struck Aden in April 2020. The flood caused outbreaks of mosquito-borne malaria, dengue, and the chikungunya virus.³ A cholera epidemic has so far infected 2.3 million Yemenis with some 4,000 people dying of the disease. Doctors fear that COVID-19 will severely restrict Yemen's ability to cope with these other health crises, and that patients weakened by the new health hazards will be more susceptible to the coronavirus. Many dozens of people are said to be dying every day. Images of Aden show dead bodies lying in the streets and there are reports of many people dying at home, especially in poorer districts. Drone footage elsewhere in the city shows row upon row of freshly dug graves. The authorities estimate that daily burials in the city have increased to 80, even 90, per day in recent weeks instead of from a pre-outbreak normal of 10 per day.

State regulations

Both the authorities in Aden and Sana'a have each separately with the UN prepared a national COVID-19 Plan, including measures to minimize the negative socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on communities. Since March this year the following mitigation measures have been taken: closure of air, land, and sea borders, and instituting curfews at the governorate level. Unfortunately, the measures will probably be less effective because of the different narratives being spread by the two warring parties, who have taken quite dissimilar approaches in dealing with the pandemic. Both are fuelling the spread of the virus than rather decreasing it.

Government of Aden

Authorities in the capital have advised people to stay at home and not leave unless there is a dire need. They closed schools days after the first registered case of coronavirus, and mosques posted signs asking people to pray one meter apart. Unfortunately, the government has not enforced widespread lockdown measures, curfews, or social distancing to curb the pandemic. Despite advice not to travel between provinces, movement between areas has remained almost the same.

Government of Sana'a

Authorities in Sana'a have taken several precautionary measures against the coronavirus, including shutting down schools and universities, and closing shopping centres and supermarkets from 6pm to 6am. After suspected corona cases rose in one area, Houthi militiamen shut down several markets in Sana'a and locked down streets in 10 neighbourhoods, barring families from leaving their homes. Travellers from infected provinces were sent to quarantine sites where they were instructed to stay for 14 days before being allowed to enter Houthi-controlled areas. It is not a real quarantine site, but a school where hundreds of people stay in classrooms and tents without basic services. Internees are free to leave the site to shop at local markets, and many escaped within hours of arriving (see for more at ***Resources*** [Government of Yemen](#)).

Society

The COVID-19 outbreak has greatly impacted social, psychological, and cultural aspects of Yemeni society. Following the announcement of a COVID-19 death amongst the refugee community in Yemen, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) recorded an escalating backlash against migrant and refugee communities, particularly in Sana'a. Since May 5, 2020 the IOM has received reports of incidents of xenophobia, physical and verbal harassment, and community incitement to identify newly arrived migrants in Sana'a. The on-going scapegoating of migrants as carriers of diseases like cholera and COVID-19 by the authorities, which is amplified by local media, is having a devastating impact on the already maligned group, who are facing significant levels of abuse, exploitation and violence, in addition to lack of access to critical health services. For more information, see below at ***Resources*** [Other COVID-19 resources on Yemen](#) - IOM Displacement Tracking Device - Dashboard COVID-19.

Mental health

The stress levels were already very high before the COVID-19 crisis and have only grown since. As elsewhere, tensions have risen inside crowded homes. Daily routines are broken, shopping is difficult, children have had to stay in cramped rooms and jobless men and women have been forced to stay at home leaving families without income. Mental disorders from before the pandemic are now getting worse; badly needed psychosocial support is seriously lacking. According to the UN, Yemen is not only the world's largest humanitarian crisis, it's also one of the world's largest mental health crises, and with more than seven million people who need mental health support. They call for ambitious commitments from countries in the way they treat psychological illness, amid a potential global spike in suicides and drug abuse. One in five people living in these circumstances would need mental health and psychosocial support due to a mental health condition. The WHO notes that Yemen is not only the world's largest humanitarian crisis, it's also one of the world's largest mental health crises, with more than seven million people who need mental health support. The country is working to provide additional mental health and psychosocial support services under the supervision of the Ministry of Health and Population. Currently, the Family Counselling and Development Foundation, a Yemeni non-governmental organization, is providing distant psychosocial counselling services for COVID-19 through one helpline. This helpline runs for 12 hours a day, 6 days a week. (For more information, see below at ***Resources***: [Government of Yemen](#), - Yemen Ministry of Health and Population and at [Other Resources for Yemen](#), - Family Counselling & Development Foundation and at [Other Resources](#) *WHO* - Looking after our mental health).

Domestic violence

Domestic violence was a critical problem in the MENA region even before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Levels of domestic violence and sexual harassment of women in Yemen are estimated to have increased by 63% since the conflict started. The restrictions of the lockdown and quarantine, together with extreme economic stress, have led to dramatic jumps in incidences of domestic violence in many countries, and Yemen is no exception.

Women and girls face specific barriers to accessing the limited health facilities that are available. After confinement measures were imposed, the number of calls to Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and domestic violence NGO hotlines has significantly increased. The Yemeni Women Union believes the shifting roles of security forces in imposing COVID-19 restrictions present further risks to women in countries like Yemen where there are few curbs on power and widespread impunity. (For more information and assistance, see below at **Resources:** Other Resources for Yemen, *Yemen Middle East Domestic Violence Agencies*; *UN Woman - Helpline Yemen* and at Other Resources - *Abaad* - Playing for Gender Equality Program and —Gender based violence case management online course; *United Nations* - Policy Brief. The impact of COVID-19 on women; *UN Women* - Global Database on Violence against Women, - The Shadow Pandemic: Domestic violence in the wake of COVID-19 (Video) and Virtual Knowledge Centre to end violence against women and girls; *WHO* - Strengthening the health system response to violence against women (video)).

Economic effects

As a consequence of COVID-19, the economy has ceased functioning properly. These secondary effects of the coronavirus are weakening Yemen even more, and lowering its resilience. Budget cuts and funding shortfalls lead to omnipresent unemployment. Most of Yemen's population rely on day labour to feed their families; they can't afford to stay at home. If they don't work, they starve. Civil servants in different parts of the country, including some doctors and health workers, have not been paid for nearly two years. The prices of basic commodities have risen and are still rising: just compared to the pre-COVID period in February 2020, they have increased by 4%. The cost of life saving items such as personal protective equipment, disposable masks, and oxygen cylinders is skyrocketing; the price of disposable face masks has increased thirtyfold across the country.

Peacebuilding process

In the spring of this year, the UN Special Envoy to Yemen continued his efforts to broker a ceasefire agreement, and resumed the political process to end Yemen's war, which has gained new urgency since the outbreak of COVID-19. Despite his efforts, the fighting continued as the ceasefire was rejected by the Houthis. In order to effectively fight the pandemic, and stabilise the country, Yemeni leaders must agree on a political solution. This needs to include urgent steps to facilitate humanitarian access, free political prisoners, and build humanitarian and economic confidence. As soon as the coronavirus started to spread in Yemen, some Houthi opposition factions viewed the pandemic as an opportunity to recruit more fighters. For instance, some Houthi activists stated in their media discourse that it is better to die a martyr in heroic battles than to die at home from the coronavirus, and that being in a battlefield is safer than being at risk in crowded towns. Fighting broke out again in northern Yemen in early 2020, causing over 500,000 vulnerable civilians to flee.

Religion

Faced with the looming threat of contagion, Muslim clerics and Islamic institutions across political and ideological divides have mobilized their followers to restrict public contact and

exposure by forbidding group prayers, enjoining people to remain at home, and stopping all religious ceremonies. However, this mobilization is hampered by factional and religious rivalries and, more importantly, by the Yemeni state itself, which has fractured into competing power centers. In Aden, the closure decision was forced on some mosques by the Southern Transitional Council. In Hadramawt, many mosques adhered to the government's decision, except those in some communities and institutions affiliated with Sufism; some Sufi Muslims rejected the ban on gatherings on March 24 to celebrate Isra and Miraj.

The Houthi movement, which follows the Zaydi school of Shia Islam and which controls most of the northern territories where most Yemenis live, aligned with the Salafists in their rejection of any coronavirus precautions. Houthis control their areas tightly, so they avoided the fragmentation of religious-based responses that occurred in other areas.

Culture

Yemen is a very close-knit society with close and extended families living together in one home, sharing everything from space and food to personal items. The concept of social distancing is foreign to most Yemenis, and its adoption is highly unlikely. Large traditional gatherings are still widespread, in particular during the Islamic month of Ramadan. For information on stigma see ***Resources*** Other resources *WHO* - A guide to preventing and addressing social stigma associated with COVID-19 (24 February 2020) and What can you do to fight stigma associated with COVID-19? (Video).

Humanitarian aid

In Yemen, anti-humanitarian propaganda has increased as the international community is blamed for introducing the virus to Yemen (rightly or wrongly). Humanitarians face a backlash in local and social media, causing a reduction in community acceptance. Tight access restrictions are placed on humanitarian operations, either by the authorities or due to the fighting, further undermining the effectiveness of the response. Nevertheless, UNICEF and the WHO are active in community engagement and awareness-raising activities. The WHO has trained more than 10,000 community volunteers as well as health-care workers on what COVID-19 is, how it is transmitted and, more importantly, how community members can protect themselves. The WHO has distributed communication materials across the country in conjunction with key influencers in ministries, teachers, students, imams, women's groups and community volunteers. These UN efforts have been supported by the airing of public service announcements, and prevention and protective messages on diverse social media platforms. Responders hope to stop the spread of the pandemic and prevent hospitals from becoming overwhelmed with the assistance of the national surveillance system. This latter system is playing a good part in the early detection of and response to COVID-19, awareness-raising campaigns and measures to bring about behavioural change.

Both the Houthi and the Yemeni government authorities have placed constraints on humanitarian aid operations in Aden and Sana'a. Aid agencies confirm the pressing need for medical equipment, protective gear, and testing equipment. Ensuring unimpeded humanitarian access to facilitate their effective COVID-19 programming remains a challenge in northern governorates (Sana'a government), where the operational environment continues to be restrictive. In the south, insecurity, bureaucratic impediments, and challenges around competing leadership also impact activities. Also, quarantine measures required in seaports at anchorage have reduced humanitarian cargo by two thirds at key points of entry.

UN officials observed that control of information about the spread of suspected COVID-19 cases by the Houthis has seriously hampered their response to the outbreak. Consequently, the UN cannot rally global donors to send supplies to tackle the outbreak. In addition, restrictions in Houthi-controlled areas are so severe that donors are not able to deliver aid to millions of people in need, meaning that some donors have had no choice but to suspend their funding at the time when Yemenis need it the most. The United States, one of the largest donors, decreased its aid to Yemen earlier this year, citing interference by the Houthis, and the World Food Program had to cut rations in half. Some 75% of the UN programs in Yemen have had to shut their doors or reduce operations, and UN-funded health services were reduced in 189 out of 369 hospitals nationwide. Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) is urging the UN and its donor states to help them avoid a catastrophe in Yemen as they are running out of money to fund healthcare workers. According to the UN, almost 80% of the population is dependent on aid to survive, and it is well-known that a fragile population is more susceptible to the coronavirus. For more information, see below at ***Resources: Other resources for Yemen*** - *Arab.org* - NGO Directory of Yemen; Humanitarian Response - Yemen; *International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC)* - Yemen; *International Rescue Committee (IRC)* - Yemen; *Reliefweb* - Yemen; *United Nations Development Fund (UNDP)* - Yemen; *UNOCHA* - Yemen and at *Other resources UNOCHA* - Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19.

Migration

Refugees and internal displaced persons (IDPs) were already vulnerable at each stage of their journey through Yemen, being at risk of stigmatization, human rights abuses, and lacking access to basic services. Over 3.6 million people have been displaced since the start of the conflict - most of those affected are women and children. The escalation of the conflict as a result of the pandemic, displacement, and overcrowded refugee camps and IDP settlements make it difficult to implement protection measures (social spacing, hand washing) by anyone. 33% of displaced people are in dangerously overcrowded camps with substandard health care and inadequate access to clean water, sanitation, and other essential services. They are unable to follow social distancing guidelines or self-isolate when sick in the camps. In short, migrants are facing increased risks contracting the coronavirus as their living conditions are not aligned with public health measures. For more information, see below at ***Resources Other resources for Yemen***, *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)* - Yemen situation; at *Other COVID-19 resources on Yemen International Organization for Migration (IOM)* - Displacement Tracking Device. Dashboard COVID-19 and at *Other resources WHO* - Displaced or refugee women are at increased risk of violence. What can WHO do?

Heritage

Unfortunately, the disruption caused by COVID-19 compounds pre-existing threats in many of the most vulnerable heritage places in the world. Yemen is, in many ways, an extremely vulnerable country. The separation of the Yemeni cultural community caused by the political situation has impeded professional networking, the personal development of young professionals, and the ability of cultural managers to recruit and partner with young talent. The COVID-19 crisis will likely isolate and weaken the potential for productive connectivity between Yemeni communities even more. There are heritage risks due to neglect, lack of resources and widespread economic difficulties, and management, to say nothing of the risk from the conflict... On top of this, ancient Aden and the areas located along Wadi Sailah, in particular, suffered from heavy rains and floods during the months of April and May 2020, causing extensive damage to ancient houses and landmarks.

International bodies including UNESCO and Interpol have reported an increase in looting of archaeological sites and illicit trafficking of cultural goods, and the destruction that it causes; in addition, museums and libraries were robbed of some of their essential holdings as thieves took advantage of the lack of protection and monitoring. For example, in the Shabwa Governorate in the Bayhan area, an old cemetery was exhumed and looted by citizens during the coronavirus crisis in April/May 2020: the looted items were photographed and put up for sale on social media.

Another tragic result of the pandemic is the many deaths of heritage staff and researchers who all were keepers of heritage knowledge and experience. To replace them will be very hard. The passing of craftsmen and women working for a long-time in traditions handed over from generation to generation has weakened the arts and crafts sector enormously and reduced many families to poverty. As others, employees in heritage and arts and crafts are reluctant to practice their profession for fear of being infected. In one report of Asharq Al-Awsat newspaper⁴, the Aden government has accused the Houthis of tampering with old manuscripts, for example those from the Great Mosque in Sana'a, seizing databases, and dismissing employees qualified to preserve antiquities and replacing them with non-specialists and loyalists. The Ministry of Culture called on UNESCO to intervene and put an end to the Houthi systematic destructive behaviour. The cancellation of cultural symposia and cultural events is also endangering intangible heritage, which is so important in Yemini culture. At the same time, cultural preservation works, seminars, and lectures have been cancelled and the support of international heritage organizations has become an urgent issue now more than ever.



© Warda Aljaradi, Covid-19 awareness campaign by Saned NGO. Sanaa, Yemen, 2020.

Due to the conflict, no Yemeni government is interested in protecting its country's heritage, and thus all supportive heritage activities have ceased. The international community is mainly focused on dealing with coronavirus, leaving Yemen's heritage to its own devices. Many NGOs have also stopped supporting the activities of local organizations concerned with heritage protection. As a result, the European Union - in partnership with UNESCO - has launched emergency response actions, cooperating with established local partners to provide emergency relief assistance, safeguard heritage, and foster sustainable cultural development. UNESCO itself directs its interventions towards the protection and promotion of tangible and intangible heritage through livelihood-oriented activities in four historical cities in Yemen.⁵ Yet, the pandemic is still spreading, weakening communities - including their role in safeguarding their heritage. For more information, see below at **Resources: Other resources for Yemen UNESCO** - National Office to Yemen and at **Other resources Arab Network for Safeguarding Cultural Heritage (ANSCH)** - COVID-19 and **UNESCO** - Culture and COVID- 19.

Recommendations

Heritage Emergency Funding

In the UNOCHA *Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19* there is no cluster for Culture or Heritage. Besides much humanitarian aid today is redirected towards fighting COVID-19 and assistance to the most vulnerable and many aid budgets have been reduced, also in the heritage sector. While several states, in the light of COVID-19, created emergency funds for their own heritage sector, today there are only very few international organisations globally that will fund heritage organisations in emergency situations. Here are a few examples (for more see the ANSCH website under COVID-19):

- *ALIPH Foundation (International Alliance for the protection of heritage in conflict areas)*: ALIPH supports a wide variety of projects to protect heritage that is endangered, under threat, or which has suffered from negligence brought about by conflict. <https://www.aliph-foundation.org/>
- *British Council. Cultural Protection Fund*: It is aimed at helping to create sustainable opportunities for economic and social development through building capacity to foster, safeguard and promote cultural heritage. <https://www.britishcouncil.org/arts/culture-development/cultural-protection-fund>
- *Gerda Henkel Foundation. Funding Initiative Patrimones*: The Patrimones funding initiative considers projects that focus on the preservation of historical cultural heritage first and foremost in crisis regions and, in some cases, will enable scientific research in the fields of history, archaeology, and art history. <https://www.gerda-henkel-stiftung.de/en/patrimones>
- *Global Heritage Fund. Global Heritage Solidarity Fund*: Putting people first in our response, we protect cultural heritage now — and ensure that coming generations will survive to protect heritage in the future. <https://globalheritagefund.org/global-heritage-solidarity-fund/>
- *International Institute for the Conservation of Museum Objects (ICC). Opportunities Fund*: This fund is for helping to create a sustainable and resilient conservation community. However, you need to join ICC first. <https://www.iiconservation.org/about/awards/opportunities>
- *Prince Claus Fund for Culture and Development. Cultural Emergency Response (CER)*: The Cultural Emergency Response programme (CER) helps protect threatened heritage. <https://princeclausfund.org/save-heritage-now>

- *UNESCO Heritage Emergency Fund*: The fund is meant for UNESCO member states, and thus government organisations, to enable them to respond quickly and effectively to crises resulting from armed conflicts and disasters caused by natural and human-made hazards all over the world.
<https://en.unesco.org/themes/protecting-our-heritage-and-fostering-creativity/emergencyfund2>
Also see http://www.unesco.org/culture/en/hef/pdf/Iraq_2016-2018.pdf
- *World Heritage Fund*: The World Heritage Fund provides about US\$4 million annually to support activities requested by States Parties in need of international assistance in managing their World Heritage sites. It is, therefore, only for governments and for World Heritage sites.
<https://whc.unesco.org/en/funding/>
- *World Monuments Relief Fund*: No information available.
<https://www.wmf.org/world-monuments-relief-fund>

Humanitarian assistance for heritage staff

Many heritage workers have lost their jobs and are struggling to make ends meet. For them, as with others, humanitarian aid in cash assistance, food assistance and the like, can be applied for at charitable (religious) organisations and humanitarian organisations.

If you are a heritage worker and you are considering applying for aid, be aware that in order to improve your chances of a successful application, it is best to apply as a group - the larger the group the better e.g. all museum staff in a city. (For a list of a few international humanitarian organisations with country offices in Yemen, see below at ***Resources: Other resources for Yemen***.) Staff that are still employed and need medical supplies and/or personal protection equipment can also turn to one of these humanitarian organisations.

Income generating projects

One way to survive the double crisis is to consider income-generating activities. Such projects consist of small community-level businesses, managed by a group of people to increase their household income through livelihood diversification. Such projects are well-known in agriculture and arts and crafts, but the idea can be applied to any sector. It is different from commercial activities organised by the cultural institutions themselves, like opening a museum shop to sell arts and crafts products or publications. In the case of income generating activities, the revenues go directly to the group of people who started the project.

As a member of staff on an archaeological site who is considering income generating projects, it is important to realize what your - Unique Selling Point is. It could be producing copies of iconic artefacts (assuming no permissions are needed), production of publications, organizing online training or courses, or online cultural activities. As traveling is, at the least, very difficult or forbidden, products need to be offered online. However, staff could also set up projects outside the heritage sector, like producing masks or disinfectants. Alternatively, projects could be started that indirectly benefit the institution staff work.

One good example is to start community-based income generating activities based around a local archaeological site to mitigate subsistence looting that may be occurring by finding another way to use it to bring money into the community. Clearly these kinds of projects require a lot of creative thinking. For funding staff, you could propose an income generating project to humanitarian organisations (see below at ***Resources: Other resources for Yemen***, UNDP - Yemen and *Arab.org* - NGO Directory of Yemen).

See for more on income generation projects:

- *Food and Agriculture Organisation*. Income generating activities (IGAs): <http://www.fao.org/3/x0206e/x0206e03.htm>
- *Museum and Heritage*. Income generation: <https://advisor.museumsandheritage.com/features/income-generation-how-to-increase-revenue-in-museums/>

Expertise

Some staff or organisations feel they need expert advice. In that case, see the specific guidance relating to your heritage sector in Part I: Heritage in these Guidelines. It should be noted that many people underestimate the knowledge and expertise that is around them, in their own country or another MENA country. Local expertise has no language barrier, you deal with a more culturally sensitive organisation, and, often, the suggested advice is appropriate to the region. In short, seek advice as close to home as possible. If that is not possible, it is best to target one (foreign) heritage institution you feel comfortable with.

Develop a relation with that institution where you can reach out with all kinds of questions. If you are seeking academic knowledge, for the latest academic articles in a specific heritage field you can consider

- *Academia*: <https://www.academia.edu/>
- *ResearchGate*: <https://www.researchgate.net/login>

Both require an account, but will not pass on your details, and many academics use them to share their work. In addition, many UK universities now have an Institutional Research Data Repository, where they place copies of any articles they write for free access.

Tasks

A crisis can sometimes be an opportunity and staff can still work on alternative tasks during lockdown, such as conducting overdue maintenance and completing essential conservation tasks. Site managers could consider whether it could be a good time to provide extra training for staff, and to encourage them to diversify their responsibilities and experience by learning about and taking on essential tasks like security, site monitoring, or public relations.

Switching tasks can give staff a chance to learn more about the work processes of the site, which can be very advantageous for the whole team. In addition, while a site is closed, the management team can make new plans and design new strategies related to running the site, develop and update the site's online presence, evaluate data collected on visitor experiences and respond to feedback, develop educational material relating to your site, or even plan future work that needs to be done. Make sure to start an awareness raising campaign, so that people become aware of what you are doing, how important your work is, and about the role of heritage in society. See more information in Part III of the Guidelines - *Basic Digital Tools*.

Further Assistance

The potency of laymen is often underestimated. Groups organized around different issues could have experience with issues your organization is struggling with, like awareness-raising campaigns, the use of digital tools, networking, and marketing strategies.

Think of youth groups, women's organisations, nature conservation groups, students, local peace committees and community groups. It may be worth contacting them and putting out a call for assistance. You could also combine an awareness-raising campaign with a call for assistance, for example, to join a neighbourhood watch. For this purpose, you should open an emergency number. In the recent past, imams, mosque visitors and entire neighbourhoods have helped cultural institutions to move their collections voluntarily, protected repositories and cultural institutions, and communities have also defended archaeological sites.

The latter is very important as guards and antiquities police, often involuntarily, have been forced to leave sites unprotected. If security forces or police are not protecting an institution or archaeological site you could, of course, always request that they do so.

Networking

During the present pandemic, it will be very difficult to acquire funds for heritage emergencies. Many of the problems, however, might be solved through cooperation. Crossing the divide and leaving political, religious, and ethnic differences behind will provide even more possibilities for solving some of your problems. Heritage is not, in itself, political - people make it political. Similarly, bringing partners from diverse heritage sectors together is very rewarding as many heritage workers face the same, or similar, problems, and it is a great learning opportunity. Networks can be created on a “horizontal” level – between, for example, staff in similar roles, like conservators, librarians, archaeologists – or on a vertical level, heritage wide, such as all museum staff. Today, social media can be very useful to connect, enabling people to communicate quickly with each other and organise themselves in small groups, via, for example, WhatsApp or Telegram. You can also create (closed) discussion groups on Facebook, or LinkedIn, or you could join already existing groups. There are downsides to this: 1) many of them are not safe and anybody can “listen in”; 2) your data will often be used for commercial purposes without your knowledge. Be on the alert for Privacy and Safety concerns. If you want a safer internet connection, you can use a Virtual Private Network (VPN) that can protect your privacy from hackers. (For more information, see Part III of the Guidelines - *Basic Digital Tools* and **Resources** Other resources for Yemen Arab.org - NGO Directory of Yemen).

Find some examples for networking below:

- *Arab Network for Safeguarding Cultural Heritage (ANSCH)*. Facebook Group: https://www.facebook.com/ANSCH-110334927271070/?ref=search&tn=%2Cd%2CP-R&eid=ARDdn0BQitlUMWW53VQBUZuL6tGY9alFi-zB9R8wtOiKMT-4cOqFbcjtf5WzwZWeMX_jOB1xYQZfpf9
- *Cultural leaders*: <https://www.weforum.org/communities/cultural-leaders>
- *Cultural Heritage Conservation Science. Research and practice*. LinkedIn Group: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/140198/>
- *Heritage for All*. Facebook Group: https://www.facebook.com/groups/214091372432295/?ref=br_rs
- *ICOM Arab*. Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1207313432621070/>
- *ICOMOS*. LinkedIn Group: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/1623567/>
- *World Economic Forum*. Arts & Culture Global Solidarity Network: <https://www.weforum.org/covid-action-platform/projects/arts-culture-global-solidarity-network>

Resources

Daily updates

- *Corona Tracker*. Yemen: <https://www.coronatracker.com/ar/country/yemen>
- *Worldometers*. Yemen: <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/yemen/>
- *World Health Organisation*. Office of Eastern Mediterranean Region: <https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjojN2ExNWl3ZGQtZDk3My00YzE2LWFjYmQtNGMwZjk0OWQ1MjFhIiwidCI6ImY2MTBjMGI3LWJkMjQtNGIzOS04MTBiLTNkYzI4MGFmYjU5MCIsImMiOjh9>

Government of Yemen

- *Government of Yemen (Sana'a)*:
<http://www.yemen.gov.ye/portal/>
- *Yemen Ministry of Health and Population*:
<http://www.moh.gov.ye/en/home.aspx>

Other COVID-19 resources on Yemen

- *International Organization for Migration (IOM)*. Displacement Tracking Device. Dashboard COVID-19:
<https://dtm.iom.int/yemen>
- *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA)*. Humanitarian Response. COVID-19-YEMEN – weekly situation reports:
<https://www.unocha.org/yemen>
- *Wikipedia*. COVID-19 pandemic in Yemen. Statistics updated daily:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19_pandemic_in_Yemen
- *World Health Organisation*
 - Dynamic Dashboard for Yemen: <https://covid19.who.int/region/emro/country/ye>
 - Country Office Yemen News: https://www.who.int/hac/network/who/co_yemen/en/
 - Country Office Yemen Twitter Group: <https://twitter.com/whoyemen?lang=en>
- *World Health Organisation*. Office of Eastern Mediterranean Region:
<http://www.emro.who.int/index.html>

Other resources for Yemen

- *Arab.org*. NGO Directory of Yemen: <https://arab.org/countries/yemen/>
- *Family Counselling & Development Foundation*: <http://fcd-f-yemen.org/AboutEN.aspx>
- *Humanitarian Response*. Yemen:
<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/operations/yemen>
- *International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC)*. Yemen:
<https://www.icrc.org/en/document/covid-19-our-response-yemen>
- *International Rescue Committee (IRC)*. Yemen: <https://www.rescue.org/country/yemen>
- *Reliefweb*. Yemen: <https://reliefweb.int/country/yemen>
- *Ummah Welfare Trust*. Yemen: <https://uwt.org/emergency-appeals/yemen-appeal/>
- *UN Agencies in Yemen* (occasional COVID-19 news). Link to agencies:
<https://yemen.un.org/>
- *UN Woman*:
 - **Helpline Yemen: +967 1 415814**
- *United Nations Development Fund (UNDP)*. Yemen: <https://www.ye.undp.org/>
- *UNESCO*. National Office Gulf States and Yemen (occasional COVID-19 news):
<https://en.unesco.org/fieldoffice/doha>
- *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)*. Yemen situation:
<https://reporting.unhcr.org/node/8487>
- *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA)*. Yemen:
<https://www.unocha.org/yemen>
- *Yemen Middle East Domestic Violence Agencies*:
 - Middle East: domestic violence information:
<https://www.hotpeachpages.net/mideast/index.html#Yemen>
 - Yemen Women Union: <http://yemenwu.org/en/>

Other resources

- *Abaad*.
 - Playing for Gender Equality Program <https://www.abaadmena.org/game>
 - Gender based violence case management online course <http://gbvcm-course.abaadmena.org/>
- *Aga Khan Development Network*. COVID-19 information:
 - Information on homemade and disposable masks: <https://www.akdn.org/publication/covid-19-information-homemade-and-disposable-masks>
 - Staying safe at home and work: <https://www.akdn.org/publication/staying-safe-home-and-work>
- *Arab Network for Safeguarding Cultural Heritage (ANSCH)*- COVID-19: <https://ansch.heritageforpeace.org/guidelines/>
- *CoronaCheck*. New mobile application (via Google Play): <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.edu.aku.akuhccheck>
- *Disaster Ready*. Understanding Burnout During COVID-19. Self-Care & Resilience (AR): <https://ready.csod.com/ui/lms-learning-details/app/material/82ac32f9-1892-483a-87e0-2f8005ffe51d>
- *Speetar*: <https://speetar.com/>
Android: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.speetar.app&hl=en> Apple: Not currently available
- *UNESCO*. Culture and COVID-19: <https://en.unesco.org/news/culture-covid-19-impact-and-response-tracker>
- *United Nations*. Policy Brief. The impact of COVID-19 on women: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/04/policy-brief-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-women>
- *UN Women*
 - Global Database on Violence against Women <https://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/en/countries/asia/yemen>
 - *The Shadow Pandemic: Domestic violence in the wake of COVID-19* (Video) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llNP_bW-o0
 - Virtual Knowledge Centre to end violence against women and girls: <https://www.endvawnow.org/en/need-help>
- *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian (UNOCHA)*. Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19: <https://fts.unocha.org/appeals/952/summary>
- *World Health Organisation*:
 - A guide to preventing and addressing social stigma associated with COVID-19 (24 February 2020) <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/a-guide-to-preventing-and-addressing-social-stigma-associated-with-covid-19>
 - About COVID-19: <http://www.emro.who.int/health-topics/corona-virus/about-covid-19.html>
 - COVID-19 - Questions and answers: <http://www.emro.who.int/health-topics/corona-virus/questions-and-answers.html>
 - Displaced or refugee women are at increased risk of violence. What can WHO do? <https://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/displaced-refugee-women-violence-risk/en/>

- Health Alert on WhatsApp (Arabic): wa.me/41225017023?text=
- Looking after our mental health:
<https://www.who.int/campaigns/connecting-the-world-to-combat-coronavirus/healthyathome/healthyathome---mental-health>
- Myth busters:
<http://www.emro.who.int/health-topics/corona-virus/myth-busters.html> and
<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-busters>
- Protect yourself and others:
<http://www.emro.who.int/health-topics/corona-virus/protect-yourself-and-other-s.html>
- Strengthening the health system response to violence against women (video):
https://youtu.be/Qc_GHITvTmI
- What can you do to fight stigma associated with COVID-19? (Video)
<https://youtu.be/vinh0IIG1p0>

¹World Health Organisation, Office of Eastern Mediterranean Region (August 23, 2020). Retrieved from <https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoib2ExNWl3ZGQtdk3My00YzE2LWFjYmQtdNGMwZjk0OWQ1MjFhIiwidCI6ImY2MTBjMGI3LWJkMjQtdNGl3OS04MTBiLTNkYzI4MGFmYjU5MCIslmMiOjh9>

² The Bahá'í is a non-Islamic religious minority that is persecuted in the Middle-East ever since its creation in 19th century Persia.

³ Chikungunya virus is spread to people by the bite of an infected mosquito.

⁴ Anonymous (April 4, 2020). Houthis Tamper With Yemeni Manuscripts, Govt Calls on UNESCO to Interfere. *Asharq Al-Awsat*. <https://english.aawsat.com/home/article/2215896/houthis-tamper-yemeni-manuscripts-govt-calls-unesco-interfere>

⁵ Anonymous (August 6, 2020). Building Resilience of Yemeni Cultural Operators in COVID-19 Context. *UNESCO News*. <https://en.unesco.org/news/building-resilience-yemeni-cultural-operators-covid-19-context>