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# HERITAGE

Guidelines for **COVID-19**



International alliance  
for the protection  
of heritage  
in conflict areas

# HERITAGE

## Guidelines for COVID-19

Iraq, Libya, Syria, Yemen

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Barcelona, August 2020

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Report Heritage *for* Peace financed by Aliph Foundation



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## *Acknowledgements*

In Barcelona, Spain, the workshop *Empowerment of civil society for the protection of cultural heritage in conflict and post-conflict areas* took place on March 4-5, 2020. It was organized by the ALIPH Foundation, the Spanish Research Council and Heritage for Peace.

The Needs Assessments for civil society organisations and authorities, held before, during and right after the workshop by Heritage for Peace, soon changed as meanwhile the COVID-19 pandemic had broken out.

Before long, the organizers realised that the heritage landscape was changing rapidly due to the pandemic. The high priority needs of the heritage organizations transformed overnight. This was particularly true for organisations in ALIPH's target countries: Iraq, Libya, Syria, and Yemen. The same month, Heritage for Peace applied for a grant within the framework of ALIPH's 2020-1744 COVID-19 Emergency Grant Fund, which was approved in June 2020.

We are very grateful to ALIPH for allowing us to assist the target countries in these difficult times - countries that suffer from a 'double crisis', violent conflict and the COVID-19 virus.

The *Guidelines for COVID-19 and Heritage* could not have been prepared without the hard work of the staff of Heritage for Peace: Rene Teijgeler, Isber Sabrine, Yoldez Halleb, Mahmoud Barakat and Elisabeth Korinth. We thank Isber Sabrine, Yoldez Halleb, Mahmoud Barakat and Abdullah Al-Masri for their support in the Arabic translation, Chris Cunliffe for his chapter on *Basic Digital Tools* and Emma Cunliffe for copy-editing this work: all editorial mistakes are hers. Heritage for Peace remains responsible for the contents of the Heritage Guidelines; any comments or criticism are welcome.

Barcelona, August 2020

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# Heritage Guidelines for COVID-19

## INTRODUCTION

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These are historic times as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to have an unprecedented impact on all aspects of the lives of people across the globe. The pandemic is adding to already existing problems in societies, which, under these circumstances, are becoming more visible. The Coronavirus might reshape the global order. Many foresee a new global economy and expect it to become more sustainable and inclusive, but the outcome of global change remains uncertain. What is certain is that the pandemic has had a tremendous effect on cultural heritage on all continents, and in all countries. People must deal with their own governments making it harder to not only coordinate the fight against the virus, but also to coordinate actions for the heritage sector. Some of the conflicts in the target countries of these Heritage Guidelines - Iraq, Libya, Syria, and Yemen - have intensified as some people reason that it doesn't matter if you die from hunger, from the Coronavirus, or on the battlefield. During the violent conflicts, the resilience of the populations has been tested constantly, and now they are taxed more than ever before. Without a doubt, this holds true for our target countries for whom these guidelines have been written. They all suffer from a 'double crisis' – violent conflict and the COVID-19 pandemic – and, on top of that, Yemen, one of the poorest countries in the world, has to cope with flooding as well. In this crisis, existing inequalities are enlarged and the most vulnerable are more affected by these crises than anyone else. Hence, the appeal has been made to humanitarian organisations that they make their COVID-19 crisis response inclusive and sustainable.

After the Barcelona workshop “*Empowerment of civil society for the protection of cultural heritage in conflict and post-conflict areas*” held on 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> of March, 2020, it became very clear that, since the Coronavirus broke out, the need for guidance on the protection of people, objects, and built heritage grew by the day. Confronted with the devastating effects of a violent conflict every day, personally as well as professionally, our colleagues could barely cope with the ensuing pandemic. Gradually, professional heritage organisations have started to publish some general guidelines for COVID-19 for their specific heritage audience. However, overall guidelines on COVID-19, heritage, and countries in conflict were missing. Therefore, we decided to produce these Heritage Guidelines. By their nature, guidelines are not detailed instructions. The reader, however, can obtain more information by using the listed resources for more specifics on one of the heritage sectors or the country in which they are residing.

The intended readership of these Heritage Guidelines is, firstly, our heritage colleagues in the target countries: Iraq, Libya, Syria, and Yemen, and, secondly, those colleagues from other countries in conflict who might also benefit from the guidelines, keeping in mind that the situation in every country is different.

The Heritage Guidelines consist of three parts. In Part I, three different heritage sectors are discussed: archaeological sites, libraries and archives, and museums. All of them are endangered by these double crises. They suffer from enforced lockdown closures and some sectors are believed to be on the verge of collapse. The main threats are to the safety of staff and visitors, and security of the premises and collections. The safety of staff not only concerns their physical health but, as is often forgotten, also their mental health. Preventive measures, if they are possible with the assistance of the community, and preservation can, however, mitigate these threats.

In this crisis, online activities are essential to reach out to communities and to colleagues, for networking, (international) cooperation, and eLearning. Some proposed (online) activities might, in the long run, have a lasting positive effect on the organisation.

Archaeological sites are confronted with an increase in looting and, consequently, a stronger illicit trade in artefacts. Guards are not paid or receive heavy cutbacks, so they stay at home leaving sites unprotected, and other guards feel that they are forced to engage in looting as a result of desperate need. Because of the nature of their tasks, archives are recommended to collect data on the COVID-19 pandemic - archiving the present for future research. A few libraries collect COVID-19 data too, and several museums collect artefacts typical of this crisis. When the end of the pandemic is at hand, all institutions will be eager to reopen. However, this must be well planned in advance and progressed carefully. In order to facilitate the different heritage sectors, we have made lists of internet links so they can reach out to others and both get and share the information needed to survive these crises.

In Part II, the country overviews are presented. As the context of the countries differ, they each entail different specifics, firstly, on the societal, political, and economic circumstances and, secondly, on health, humanitarian aid and heritage. Though the basic data on COVID-19 - confirmed cases, fatalities, recovered cases - might differ per country, the health situation clearly is deteriorating in all of the countries. A serious problem with the basic health data is underreporting and misinformation spreading. On the basis of this unreliable data, it is very difficult to take the right decisions and it impedes the providing of international humanitarian assistance. Some warring parties purposely suppress data reporting and use incorrect data for their own political purposes. Due to the conflict situations, health infrastructures were seriously weakened prior to the pandemic, and they have worsened since, leaving many countries unable to meet the requirements necessary to fight the Coronavirus. State regulations depend on the different authorities within countries and, in some parts of the target countries, they are difficult to implement and maintain. In the country overviews, we believe it to be important to pay attention to the societal consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, as they also affect the lives of those working in the heritage sector. As with mental health, the increase in domestic violence due to the present crisis is often overlooked. It is the responsibility of any employer to provide assistance to any of their employees who face such problems. Furthermore, cultural and religious stigmas are proving to be obstacles to the prevention, spread and proper treatment, of the COVID-19 virus.

The humanitarian aid sector has changed drastically since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Many UN and non-governmental organisations have restructured their budgets, due to the changing demands of coronavirus affected countries, and have redirected their funds to the most vulnerable. This has led to fewer funds being available to finance the heritage sector. Furthermore, most countries put the needs of their own heritage first. Since the target countries all face violent conflicts, their heritage sectors have been hit particularly hard. Political unrest, budget cuts, destruction, deterioration, neglect, and disappearing tourist industry are all negative impacts of the conflicts, which have become worse since the start of the pandemic. Poverty and declining living circumstances have, as with other citizens, also reached heritage staff. They can apply to humanitarian agencies for life support. In times before COVID-19 there were emergency funds available to help safeguard heritage but, today, these have nearly disappeared. The result is that the heritage institutions have been almost completely left on their own. However, there are still possibilities for online support, assuming the internet connections are sufficiently well developed. Networking, outside expertise, income-generating projects, and eLearning are, for example,

all opportunities to make the best of these crises. To assist our colleagues in the target countries, we have made lists of internet links to organisations, programs and information sources.

In Part III, we have collected information on some basic digital tools and services. Due to lockdown closures and travel restrictions, one of the few ways left to communicate with staff, visitors, and colleagues is through the internet and the many varied social media applications. For that reason, we consider it important to pay attention to the many different digital tools - tools that we hope can continue to be useful after the coronavirus. In this part, we have assembled a list of applications of the most useful and popular social media, messaging services, virtual meetings, file sharing, virtual workspaces and briefly discuss decentralised solutions. It is meant as an introduction to basic tools in a profuse market where it is easy to lose sight of which tool is best for what purpose. Next, it facilitates making informed choices (pros and cons), especially as regards such an important issue as privacy and security. The emphasis is on 'basic tools' but even the well-informed reader might find something useful in this part. We do not cover marketing, eLearning, career development, or website building. For these, please follow the ANSCH website and keep an eye on the ANSCH Facebook page.<sup>1</sup>

Most of the resources in these guidelines originate from western heritage institutions. The disadvantage here is that they mainly apply to non-conflict regions and assume western standards. Still, the authors have tried to take these different circumstances into consideration – however, we know we have not completely succeeded. You will find many recommendations on COVID-19 and the effects it has on heritage. These can change according to new insights and as a result of further research. Much is not known about this new coronavirus, so be sure to keep following the news about the virus and to check the information from suggested links regularly. Measures and regulations from authorities may change from day to day too, as does the advice of the World Health Organisation.

Last, but not least, Heritage for Peace is a neutral non-governmental organisation. We believe that heritage itself is apolitical. It is the interpretation of people in a particular time and place that make heritage political and that is even more so in cases of conflict. Our analysis is based on diverse sources from general news sites, to professional journals and magazines, to data from UN and non-governmental organisations, and heritage organisations. We hope that you will find these guidelines helpful, and wish you all the best as you move forward through these unprecedented times.

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<sup>1</sup> ANSCH website <https://ansch.heritageforpeace.org/> and ANSCH Facebook group <https://www.facebook.com/ANSCH-110334927271070/>



**PART 1**  
**HERITAGE**

# Heritage Guidelines for COVID-19

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

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### ***Introduction***

This chapter sets out the general situation of the archaeological sites in the target countries of these guidelines as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It will begin by describing the situation, before suggesting advice for archaeology staff responding to the crisis, with links to further resources. It is primarily aimed at staff of archaeology, or those interested in the effects of the pandemic on the archaeological sites of these countries.

Archaeological sites are exposed to a variety of threats worldwide related to both human activities and natural hazards. Even before the outbreak of COVID-19, most of the archaeological sites in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region were at risk, and lacked sufficient funding. The coronavirus has laid another burden on the archaeological field, and restricted, stopped, or even reversed previous restoration and support efforts in war-torn societies. Archaeological sites have been directly affected by the global pandemic and will continue to experience extreme disruption. These Guidelines compile information and recommendations to help those responsible for archaeological sites to ensure that their site remains secure and in a good state of preservation, and that both staff and visitors remain safe and healthy. The following sections include various ideas other sites have implemented that have proved to be successful, as well as ideas and recommendations for activities that could be undertaken while sites are closed during lockdown, and for reopening measures. They seek to cover all activities needed in order to ensure that - despite the emergency situation - management plans are in place and effective. Several organisations, listed below, have been quite active in developing measures and recommendations which they keep up to date. Given the difficulties caused by the current pandemic, it is natural that not all measures can be implemented at your site: it will depend on the structure of the site and the resources available. Therefore, choose the recommendations that fit your site best and which are possible to implement. We recognize that knowledge about COVID-19 continues to evolve, which may require you to adapt, so keep following the regular updates from professional organisations, keep your staff informed, and adjust the measures you put in place whenever it is appropriate.

### ***Lockdown***

Due to the threat to public health posed by the spread of COVID-19, many archaeological sites have been closed, and the related cultural institutions, research centres, and companies that provide services or goods for archaeological sites have had to pause their work, in most cases for an indefinite period. Upcoming events and conferences have been cancelled, postponed, or shifted to virtual platforms. Numerous sites have lost essential sources of income due to the drop in tourism, events, and field excavations and many people working on archaeological sites or in a position related to a site have lost their jobs and have been forced to look for other income opportunities. There is a danger that they will not return to their former positions and consequently the sector will lose their experience and expertise. While excavations are on hold and guards do not get paid and/or have left their jobs, the security of archaeological sites is at significant risk.

Although the closure is temporary, i.e. until COVID-19 is under control, many sectors have chosen to ask their staff to work remotely, requiring them to carry out new or different work. For many archaeologists, on the other hand, working remotely is nothing new and much can be done in the field of research while excavations are halted. However, the top priority of any archaeological site should be the health and safety of their staff and the communities they serve.

### Communication

It is essential to stay in touch with those you serve: communication is key in these unprecedented times in order to maintain a connection with the public. Keeping your local community connected to your site and updated about what is going on, will help them to understand the current changes and prevent any loss of connection. Ensure your staff remains well-informed, and, ultimately, confirm an easy return to work and a smooth reopening for your site. Therefore, stay in touch with your staff on a regular basis, especially regarding their health situation. While the site remains closed, put up physical signs on the entrances of your site that communicates the reason for the closure. If you have a digital presence, you are advised to put COVID-19 resources, including updates and the local regulations, on your home page. Update all of this information regularly, but also explain why the closure is important, what it means for the community, how you are protecting your staff, and how you are planning to protect visitors if and when they can return.

Be aware that the current crisis is posing big challenges for local authorities and governments who are currently overwhelmed with work. Archaeologists will need to be involved in the development of meaningful and sufficient COVID-19 policies to ensure the protection of archaeological heritage. Staying in contact with local authorities is therefore vital. Discuss your needs and share ideas on how sites can be reopened when possible. Share contact information to give people the opportunity to contact you with questions, concerns, or even ideas. This information should be available directly at the entrance to the site, and on online platforms such as your website, tourism websites that share information about archaeological sites, and social media platforms. Make sure the information telephone number is adequately staffed. (See for more information below at *Resources Lockdown Heritage Foundation, - Crisis Communication for Leaders and Part III of the Guidelines - Basic Digital Tools*).

### Activities

The coronavirus has developed and spread differently around the world, so each country experiences the pandemic differently and reacts with different measures depending on their resources, capacity, and availability of reliable information. It is recommended that each archaeological site management team undertakes their own site assessment in order to develop specific actions that are related to the nature of the site, its size, and the way it is organized and managed. Sharing the results with others can be helpful in exchanging experiences and can help distribute important information on how strategies can be implemented and what has helped to keep costs as low as possible.

A crisis can sometimes be an opportunity and staff can still work on alternative tasks during a lockdown, such as conducting overdue maintenance and completing essential conservation tasks. It may also 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 excavations that need to be done. Make sure to start an awareness campaign, so that people become aware of what you are doing, how important your work is, and about the role of archaeological heritage in society. (For more information see Part III of the Guidelines - *Basic Digital Tools*). This is also the time where long overdue research can be finished. (For more information, see below in **Resources** Lockdown Cultural Heritage Agency - Guidelines for Building Archaeological Research). Listen to the needs of the local community (some additional suggested methods are detailed below) and get engaged in developing ways to help both them and the local authorities in their work. Even if it does not relate to heritage work, providing such support can sometimes help to strengthen bonds with the surrounding community, which will have a positive effect on their relationship with the site. Offer other possibilities like online activities to show that you are taking deliberate action to still serve. We have collated some suggested activities that can be done during lockdown for you to consider.

#### *Online activity*

Although archaeological sites are closed, online communications with community groups is still possible. Whilst heritage sites are closed as part of the coronavirus response measures, many have started to increase their online activity in order to remain in communication with their audience and offer new ways of engagement with their visitors. This can be a great opportunity to enlarge your own audience and to stay in touch with your community. Social media platforms offer virtual spaces for people to create networks around shared interests and are of great help in times of lockdown when sites must close. You could ask visitors online if they are interested in doing non-essential activities. Social media activities are easily planned and implemented. There are three main purposes that social media can be used for under the present circumstances.

#### Active community participation and involvement

Community should be at the heart of any activity in the heritage field, as it was *by* people that heritage was created, and it is *for* people that heritage is preserved. Social media platforms give a unique insight into what people are generally interested in, as you can study what questions people have and what content they find interesting. Engage your community in the work of your site - for example, invite them to send you questions about what they have always wanted to know. Ask them what they would like to see in the future when the site reopens. Also, include your audience in the decision-making processes, if possible, and integrate community perspectives in your work. Often, people are more likely to help when they realize they can be part of the solution. This can be done simply, by posting questions on your social media platform and asking people to respond in the comments section. Or you could create a poll with pre-determined options and invite people to participate. Listen to their views and try to incorporate them.

#### Knowledge dissemination

Social media platforms can help to disseminate knowledge about heritage in general and archaeology in particular, its importance, and about various aspects of safeguarding archaeological heritage. Develop content that encourages audiences to learn and explore your site from home. For example, share pictures and material from your site to show aspects that are rarely seen.

Also, share your activities during lockdown to keep the audience updated about your work, and show you are still there. Or simply share interesting articles that can inform people about your archaeological site.

#### Raising awareness

Take advantage of social media tools to explain to your audience why archaeological heritage is important, what threats it is currently facing and to create awareness and sensibility. Education about threats can actively change the way people will interact with archaeological heritage in the future. One way, for example, is to share pictures of threats – like decay, vandalism, or illegally dug holes – with explanations of how these directly impact the site and its surrounding community in a negative way. Start meaningful discussions with your audience on how this could be prevented and what role community and society can play in it. Use relevant hashtags in order to be visible to communities of the same interest. Hashtags like #protectheritage, #cultureunderthread, #culturalracketeering, #climateheritage or #unite4heritage are campaigns to raise awareness about the threats facing heritage worldwide; using them can help to enlarge your audience and engage in online discussions.

#### Forming digital partnerships and collaborations

As the main purpose of social media platforms is to create networks of shared interests, use your platforms to get in touch with other archaeological sites, people, and organisations that work in the same field to exchange information and experiences, and actively support each other. This can be done by directly contacting pages, liking their page, sharing their posts, or tagging them in your posts that might intersect with their work. Engage in online discussions and be available for people to contact you. Follow and contribute to hashtags to join important conversations and share your perspective to enrich the debate. (See Part III of the Guidelines - *Basic Digital Tools* to get more information on the various social media platforms and how to use them. See **Resources Lockdown - Digital heritage** for a list of helpful online sources as well as *Social Media Examiner* for guidance in social media related questions.)

Many institutions have started to upload virtual tours and videos on online platforms to enable visitors to engage with sites from home. Even if professional camera equipment or other software is limited, videos are easily made with a smartphone and can take online communities on a personal journey through a site while it is closed, letting them engage with the staff as well as the site. (See more information below at **Resources Lockdown - Digital Heritage** - Archaeological Institute of America – Virtual Tours).

#### Institutional cooperation

In times of global challenges, it is necessary to seek (inter-)national allies and develop collaborative networks that are able to help each other when it seems impossible to receive outside aid. For example, it is possible to start crowdfunding campaigns by engaging people in the protection of archaeological sites. As many archaeological sites are facing similar problems, it can help to network with other sites and exchange practices or jointly plan protective measures. This exchange of help and experience not only helps in the short term but can encourage and strengthen institutional cooperation at a time when the pandemic closure measures are separating people and communities. Select an archaeological institution of your choice that can be contacted for assistance and that can serve as a reliable and trustworthy partner in times of uncertainty. One possible helpful international institution might be ICCROM Sharjah in the UAE, for example.

(For more details, see **Resources Lockdown - ICCROM Sharjah contact and Networks** for possible partners and groups.)

## ***Safety***

The safety and well-being of people should always be a priority. It is utterly vital to place the health and safety of staff at the forefront of decision making. Stay well-informed about their mental and physical health and support them where you can from home. In crisis management the health of staff is often overlooked. Establish health and safety protocols for staff and volunteers, and stay in touch on a regular basis while the archaeological site remains closed. (See more information on how to protect yourself and others at ***Resources Safety – WHO - Protection measures.***)

Follow local guidance for hygiene and social distancing. Share and keep your staff up to date with recent advice from your government or local authorities regarding changes to health, safety, and work practices affecting personnel, and changes to employment conditions. Do not forget that work is more than “just-a-job”; socializing on the work floor is an important part of any labour force, so consider ways for staff to socialise online, and try and consider safe ways for them to socialise at work. Digital tools can also be used for online social gatherings. (See Part III of the Guidelines - *Basic Digital Tools.*) To stay informed on the latest on the COVID-19 virus, see the updates of your national or regional authorities and at ***Resources Safety - World Health Organisation – About Covid-19 and World Health Organisation – Health Alert on WhatsApp (Arabic).***

### **Physical health**

The most common way to contract the COVID-19 virus is, as we know, from other people. In order to stop the coronavirus from spreading, it is therefore necessary for staff (and visitors) to frequently wash their hands, clean used surfaces and equipment, and keep a social distance recommended by the World Health Organization. Make sure that soap and, if possible, antiseptic hand gel, are available for use. Wearing a face mask or using barriers or screens to separate people from each other is important in order to prevent the virus from spreading through sneezing, coughing, or strongly exhaling air. A “back-to-back” or “side-to-side” working arrangement may be recommended in offices with multiple people. Visitors and staff that do not feel well should stay at home and should not enter the heritage site. Vulnerable groups who are at higher risk, such as people with severe illnesses, compromised breathing (like asthma), or who are over the age of 60 should remain at home in order to lower their risk of infection. (To stay informed about the latest updates regarding the COVID-19 virus, see updates from international, national, or regional authorities at ***Resources Safety - World Health Organisation – About COVID-19 and Health Alert on WhatsApp (Arabic).*** Several institutions have offered guidance on safety measures at working places including archaeological sites. See ***Resources Safety*** below for helpful sources. For more on masks see ***Resources Safety - Aga Khan Development Network - COVID-19 information - Information on homemade and disposable masks and Science Advances (07 Aug 2020) - Low-cost measurement of facemask efficacy for filtering expelled droplets during speech.***

Transmission through surfaces is less likely than person-to-person contact in an enclosed space for a long period of time, which is believed to be the primary way to catch the coronavirus. However, the possibility still exists that the virus could be spread by touching contaminated surfaces and then touching your nose, mouth or eyes. The longest survival of the coronavirus found so far has been three days on glass, steel and plastic (e.g. plastic-based materials such as CD’s and DVD’s). It survives for shorter periods on porous surfaces like cardboard, textiles, and wood. On cardboard, it survives 24 hours and on copper surfaces for just 4 hours. Generally, the harder the surface, the longer the life of the coronavirus.

The influences of the environment on the life span of the COVID-19 virus have not yet been researched well enough. Presumptive evidence shows that, in general, cool temperatures (4-6°C) prolong viral persistence while very warm temperatures (60° C and above) result in rapid loss of virulence. Low relative humidity (20-30%), also prolongs virulence, but may reduce surface to surface transfer. Dust raised in such dry conditions can be problematic as it re-aerosolizes attached viruses. As elsewhere (such as shopping) these days the advice is: if you wash your hands several times a day, particularly after handling objects that others could have touched, the risk of transmission is significantly lower from an already low risk of transmission. It is therefore vital, to keep surfaces clean and sanitize tools after they have been used. It is consent to not touch archaeological objects without gloves and even more essential in times of a pandemic.

### Mental health

Stress and anxiety are normal reactions in unfolding crises that severely affect the way people work and live. Violent conflicts and political instability have already claimed much of people's resilience. Daily routines are broken, shopping is difficult, children must stay in cramped rooms, and discharge or salary cuts leave families with less income or, in some cases, none at all. Regular health services, including mental health care, have often stopped and people are not treated. Mental disorders from before COVID-19 are now getting worse. Clearly, the badly needed psychosocial support is seriously lacking. It is therefore vital to pay attention to one's own health and the health of others. The Reference Center for Psychological Support of the Red Cross recommends the following —To Do's:

- Fact-check any news that is being consumed and self-educate with accurate information
- Maintain a daily routine to remain structured
- Acknowledge your own fears and feelings of helplessness without denying what is going on
- Actively stay in touch with friends and family virtually in order to maintain strong relationships; seek help from others and offer them help if they need it
- Take care of your own physical and mental health

(See more at ***Resources** Safety – World Health Organisation – Resources on mental health and The Reference Center for Psychological Support of the Red Cross*).

## ***Security***

### Threats

The situations of archaeological sites differ in each country but - in times of violent conflict - it is clear that they are all extremely weakened as a result of previous neglect, underfunding, damages, and other pressures. In observing press releases since the pandemic began, and from talking to various actors in the region, several factors have been identified as key threats to archaeological sites during the COVID-19 pandemic. They are mostly related to a lack of physical protection measures and a lack of physical presence on the sites. In addition, the widespread increasing economic difficulties faced by many people, combined with the opportunities presented by the site closures and reduction in site security, has resulted in an increase in illegal activities threatening cultural heritage such as vandalism, burglary, looting, and illicit trafficking.

A variety of factors impact the protection of sites. In order to understand the various threats, their context, and their impact on sites, the example of World Heritage sites can give clarity. The World Heritage Center has implemented one of the most comprehensive monitoring systems of any international heritage convention,

collecting and analysing data on the conservation of World Heritage sites properties since 1979. Data analyses from 2018 identified a variety of peacetime and conflict factors that represent major threats to heritage sites including:

- building activities and development
- further development of transport infrastructure and utilities
- pollution, resource extraction
- war related destruction
- illegal activities such as looting, burglary and illegal trafficking
- climate change
- natural disasters or other sudden natural events
- cultural use of heritage (impact of tourism, local community use)
- lack of efficient management.

There is no disputing that the COVID-19 pandemic has already caused a great shift in the extent to which these factors impact heritage sites in the MENA countries, and that the most remote sites will be hit the hardest. However, whilst these very specific threats to heritage might be diminished by the closure of sites and tourist companies, the lack of visitors simultaneously results in a dramatic drop in the financial resources through tourism that is so vital for the survival and protection of these cherished places.

#### *Vandalism and destruction*

The lack of protection at sites leaves properties exposed to deliberate destruction or abuse. The pandemic lockdown represents a big challenge for archaeological sites with regards to their security. Several countries in the MENA region have reported an increase in vandalism on archaeological sites as many of them are not protected by a fence or security guards to restrict and ensure proper usage of the space; they are simply open for people to enter the property.

#### *Burglary and looting*

While the actual loss of heritage during the pandemic will only be assessable when the situation will be back to normal, it is expected, that there has been an increase in burglary and looting at closed archaeological sites around the globe. In most cases, looters and thieves took advantage of distracted authorities, and the lack of security guards and antiquities police, to break into buildings; such attempts are thought to be strategically planned. However, in the face of the economic fallout and increased social instability resulting from the pandemic, many people are forced (once again) to turn to subsistence looting. However, the involvement of organised crime in looting and burglary, and the ensuing illicit trafficking of cultural objects remains a serious consequence.

In April 2020, cultural ministers from different countries expressed their concern to UNESCO on the lack of protection of archaeological sites around the globe.<sup>1</sup> Limited or no surveillance measures at all have left most archaeological sites in the MENA region unprotected and open for looters. This includes the closure of the World Heritage sites in the 167 countries that have properties on the World Heritage List.<sup>2</sup> While archaeological sites within or near cities usually receive more attention and protective measures, sites in remote areas are heavily affected by looting. While there have been many individual reports of the destruction of sites, the extent of the loss remains unknown due to the lack of any systematic monitoring during this unprecedented crisis. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that illegally excavated objects are harder to trace as they have never been documented or registered.



### *Illicit Trade*

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, several organisations - such as the ATHAR Project, who monitor the sale of artefacts via online platforms such as Facebook groups - have reported an increase of activities. The ATHAR Project (Antiquities Trafficking and Heritage Anthropology Research Project) is carrying out investigative studies led by a group of heritage experts on organized crime with a focus on illegal trafficking of cultural property and its linkage to financing terrorism. In 2019, a research study by the project revealed over ninety Facebook groups in which a total of approximately 1.9 million members shared tips for looting ancient sites and sought to sell their findings. Currently, the organisation is monitoring 120 Facebook groups: the largest group has over 300,000 members and a daily post rate of around 175 posts. In many cases, the sellers advertised their stolen goods with videos showing footage of the actual looting in order to prove the authenticity of their wares. Responding to these reports, as part of a new set of standards, Facebook and Instagram changed its policy in June 2020 to ban the selling of historical artefacts and attempts to encourage trade on their platforms.<sup>3</sup> However, many have expressed concerns that these regulations will not be followed due to a lack of enforcement.

Overall, COVID-19 has had both positive and negative effects on illicit trade. The closing of borders and forced lockdown initially hampered transnational trafficking and increased the chance that traffickers would be caught or forced to pause transporting cultural objects over borders, especially at the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic. However, the lockdown has forced archaeological sites to close, often leaving them unprotected and open for looters. At the same time, insecure job situations are increasingly encouraging people to turn to crime to generate income for their families. Criminal groups have now adapted to the new pandemic regulations. The Alliance to Counter Crime Online and the Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, for example, are currently examining the relationship between the health emergency and the illicit trafficking of cultural property after reports of health emergency workers who were caught trafficking objects. In some cases, police found fake money, weapons, and drugs alongside stolen antiquities. The findings, yet again, confirm the interlinkages between antiquities trafficking and other types of organized crime. Criminal groups may be strategically targeting health workers to take advantage of their ability to move freely. (See more at [Resources Security](#) - The ATHAR Project and Alliance to Counter Crime Online and Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime)

### Preventive measures

To provide the best protection, it might be helpful for staff managing a site to start with a general site security assessment to identify the site's vulnerabilities, and the potential threats to it. (For more information about site security assessments, see below at [Resources Security](#) - *ASIS Foundation Research Council*, - CRIPS Report, which presents a helpful case study and introduces different methodologies as well as possible actions that can be taken). As most archaeological sites face similar challenges, it might be worth working in closer cooperation within a network of sites in which challenges, suggested practical solutions, and help can be exchanged.

However, the most effective strategy to hinder looting on a site is to obstruct or prevent people from entering the site, and/or to counteract the reason why people loot or vandalise. As the former is easier, it is recommended to evaluate possible ways in which archaeological sites can remain guarded and protected during a lockdown. The first step is to seek ways to implement a physical presence on the site, either by ensuring there are civilian guards,

or requesting that police, or even military forces, to protect the site. The assignment of human resource needs, of course, should be assessed in close cooperation with local authorities and health organisations following public regulations on work and travel during this time, and organized in line with governmental regulations on COVID-19. As humanitarian aid is redirected towards fighting COVID-19, institutions should research other possibilities to pay guardians on the site. A few organisations have established emergency funds in order to provide financial help for heritage preservation workers and institutions struggling under the pandemic. (For funding possibilities, see below at ***Resources Security - Funding possibilities.***)

If physical surveillance is not possible, you could resort to closed-circuit television (CCTV) or other electronic monitoring systems. Bear in mind that during the coronavirus crisis, it will probably be difficult to have it installed if it isn't already; besides, it is very costly. However, such systems may deter criminals, or allow you to catch them and recover your collections if it records them. In addition, it may allow you to detect whether someone has placed your facility under surveillance to check your security – however you will need to either monitor your premises in person, or check your CCTV feed regularly to see if you are being watched. Bear in mind, once you notice an irregularity, you need to have a follow-up plan in place – who do you warn? You should work with the emergency response services to develop procedures to handle such situations, and ensure all staff is aware of them. Nevertheless, even with electronic or in-person site-monitoring, some risks will remain, such as vandalism, burglary, lack of maintenance, and the standard threats to collections.

While the site is still closed to visitors, take the time to undertake security measures such as fixing fences, and checking doors, windows, gates and alarm systems. If the site is not directly protected from the outside, take this time to set up clear boundaries to define the protected area. If necessary, build a fence around the site to clearly separate the archaeological area from other public spaces. (For more information, see below at ***Resource Security - ASIS Foundation Research - CRIPS Report and WikiHow - How to Protect and Preserve Archaeological Sites.***)

Lastly, while the site is closed due to the pandemic measures, make sure that objects and working material, such as tools for archaeological excavations, are stored in a safe place to limit opportunities for theft. It might be helpful to transport material from unprotected excavation houses to a space that is more secure until excavations take place again, as excavation houses are often targeted in conflicts and times of insecurity.

A summary of measures to take for the exterior include a regular check on:

- close all external doors, windows, blinds and shutters and make sure they remain closed and secured
- check gutters and drains for potential blockages
- store sensitive materials and equipment, and ensure safe storage is maintained (including checks on flammable materials, power stations, and external equipment for air conditioning)
- check exterior devices for fire and security alarm systems
- clear debris, dust bins and food stuffs, and clean the gardens, so as not to attract rodents and other pest hazards
- demonstrate that the building is being monitored by maintaining walkways and landscaping

For the interior, you should check the following:

- check the window coverings (for example, are blinds down/closed or up/open)
- deploy glass security film which will slow down the perpetrators
- ensure lights are turned off except for security lighting
- ensure power is turned off where appropriate
- remove all fresh food from the premises - empty refrigerators and leave the door open;
- check the climate control, including remote controls, temperature and relative humidity
- remove high-risk items from display, and make sure any items on loan, returned items and valuable items are placed in (and remain in) secure storage
- secure valuables (cash boxes, computer screens, laptops and other electronic equipment)
- secure important sensitive documents and information
- test fire and security alarms
- ensure fire doors are closed
- make sure flammable materials are stored in fire protective storage
- cover collection items that may be vulnerable to light damage
- cover objects on open display/storage with dust sheets
- make sure water taps are turned off and dehumidifiers are turned off and emptied
- check for mould infestations and rodents and check pest traps
- clear debris and empty dust bins
- and as you leave, make sure doors and windows are closed correctly (that is, are they locked, closed against dust, or unlocked, ajar or open)

In all instances, it is of the utmost importance to check the procedures both before leaving the premises, especially in case of emergency. Additionally, make sure to establish a means and process to record and share the results of security checks between relevant colleagues.

#### *Proactive measures for return of stolen objects*

Despite institutional attempts to keep properties guarded and secure, in the midst of chaos, objects might still be stolen. It is therefore important to strategically plan for this eventuality in order to increase the chance that stolen objects might be traced back to their origin.

To do this, the object either needs to be marked with a permanent sign or recorded in such a way to demonstrate proof of ownership.

Visible marks on objects are often scratched out or washed away. Recognising this, the SmartWater Foundation, in close cooperation with Iraq, the University of Reading and RASHID International (Research, Assessment and Safeguarding of the Heritage of Iraq in Danger), has developed an innovative way to mark heritage objects with a stable invisible colour ink, called SmartWater. The liquid can be applied to inorganic materials, such as glass, stone, metal, pottery. The result of this marking method is still under discussion (See more at ***Resources*** [Security](#) - SmartWater Foundation).

However, labelling objects is not the only measure that should be undertaken. All objects owned by a site should be clearly documented (with photos) and labelled, and all the information should be stored in inventories of the objects(see Object ID for standards), ideally with backup copies stored off site. As well as having significant day-to-day management benefits, it allows collection managers to see quickly what is missing in the event of a theft. Furthermore, many laws relating to the restitution of objects from foreign countries require the objects to be inventoried so that an institution can prove ownership before objects are returned, such as the UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970), which is signed by 140 states.<sup>4</sup> (See more at ***Resources*** [Security](#) – Object-ID).

### *Monitoring*

If physical surveillance is not possible you could resort to closed-circuit television or other electronic monitoring system. However, not all sites will have acquired such a system and during the Corona crisis it will probably be difficult to have it installed; besides it is very costly.

Information is everything. Even if sufficient protection measures could not be implemented, it is vital to gather as much information as possible on what is happening on the sites and document any activity that is recognized. If staff is shifting their workplace to their homes, this might be a chance to shift tasks to online monitoring measures in order to learn more about the systems of online trade markets. While in the past, looting was often not documented, the increase of viral videos of looters and online groups makes it easier to document illegal activities and increases the chance that looters can be caught in the future. Staff can be of great help in detecting online platforms, reporting suspected illicit activity to local authorities, and observing and documenting online activities related to heritage sites. This documentation can be reported to, for example, the ATHAR project, to enhance their work in the field of combatting illicit online trafficking.

Set up a hotline for, or nominate someone willing to offer contact details to, the local community for them to report illegal activities on archaeological sites so that you can monitor and document what is happening around sites. These reporting measures usually not only contribute to gathering information about current threats, but simultaneously help to actively engage the local community, and raise awareness about the various threats heritage can be exposed to. Awareness-raising campaigns over social media platforms can also help to educate people on the harm of illicit trafficking.

### *Community Engagement*

Many sites around the globe have started to actively engage their local community as guardians and keepers of cultural heritage. Several cases from Iraq show how sites are effectively protected when they are part of community's identity and people feel responsible for their well-being and conservation for future generations, even during war. Local communities can play an active part in monitoring measures and are great communicators to raise awareness about the importance of archaeological heritage. Even if physical meetings are prohibited, institutions can start online groups on various online platforms and engage local communities or even communities from far away.

In the UK, for example, a research team at Exeter University was able to discover a range of archaeological sites from prehistoric, Roman, and medieval times by engaging volunteers who were willing to contribute from home. The volunteers identified these ancient sites using aerial survey. Sites like Terrawatchers also offer the opportunity for volunteers to get involved and track damage across the MENA region using satellite imagery. Volunteers are given sites at random and take an online tutorial to learn to recognise type of damage. (See more at [\*\*Resources\*\* Security - Terrawatchers](#)).

While many students face uncertainty due to the postponement of their educational courses, some cultural institutions have the capacity to offer educational programmes in which students can continue their studies in different formats. It may be useful to develop new innovative formats that can respond to the current crisis in ways that do not only seek solutions that support your own institution, but provide support at a broader societal level. It may also help to get in touch with universities to exchange ideas on how institutions can help each other in these times and what an archaeological site can do for students who are trying to grow in the heritage field.

### Digital Security

Billions of people are stuck inside their homes due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the world is becoming increasingly dependent on the internet.

The race towards a connected world was already in full swing, and the outbreak has further highlighted the potential of the internet for tackling problems in the 21st century. Long-term impacts of the coronavirus outbreak have, essentially, pushed people to become more comfortable with technology and the risks associated with it. Nowadays, a modern citizen requires some form of digital literacy to access information and making archaeological material and information accessible online play a key role in this.

In the rush to migrate workers to remote work during lockdown and offer services online, data privacy and security sometimes get lost. Unfamiliar settings, new routines, and increased reliance on third party technology all puts data privacy at risk. It is of the utmost importance that your organisation is aware of the risks, both for data exchange within the organisation network and data entering the network from outside. Thus, take the necessary precautions to mitigate these risks. In the chapter *Basic Digital Tools* (Part III of the Guidelines), we have collected brief information on social media, digital communication services, digital filesharing, virtual workspaces, virtual private networks (VPNs) and decentralised solutions; we have also touched on privacy and security problems.

### **Preservation**

The strict regulation of many activities as a part of the coronavirus response means that archaeological sites may be less vulnerable to threats from development (such as building works, road creation, and the placement of associated infrastructure like laying gas and electricity cables), as well as mitigating negative impacts of tourism. However, important ongoing preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation work will also have been interrupted. The closure of archaeological sites not only affects the protection of the site, but stops any financial provision to employees who were dependent on the work. This can severely prolong the process of recovery for societies already drained from years of conflict.

If staff is not granted access to sites different online activities that can be carried out, discussed above in the section **Lockdown**. In case staff is allowed to access the site under certain regulations, undertake repair work and other measures related to the security of the building, Archaeological sites are usually located outdoors, without protection from the weather: try to cover archaeological surfaces to prevent, or at least limit, the negative impact of weather conditions and erosion, such as laying down tarpaulin or erecting shelters. (For more information, see **Resources** Preservation - *WikiHow*, How to Protect and Preserve Archaeological Sites). Heritage for Peace has compiled helpful resources on preservation and restoration measures for all sorts of materials and building structures. (See more information at **Resources** Preservation - *Resources on Monuments and Archaeological Sites* and other sources on the list below. For funding conservation and rehabilitation work see below at **Resources** Security - *Funding Possibilities*).

It is important that the state of conservation of the archaeological site is regularly monitored and documented. Set up a consistent monitoring plan that provides relevant data for you, allowing you to react to observed site needs. It is important to make a checklist of all actions concerning preservation. Keep control at all times, consult with staff, and divide the tasks. In this regard, the role of communities is often overlooked. Communities and neighbourhoods can play a vital role in both conservation and preservation measures, including monitoring procedures. There are many sources that can inspire and

help you to develop more meaningful involvement of communities. For example, the Getty Conservation Institute has publications exploring different approaches around conservation and community planning, and community asset mapping. (For more information, see below at *[Resources Preservation - Getty Conservation Institute](#)*).

## ***Reopening***

### Simple protective measures when reopening

Archaeological sites may have advantages when reopening, as outdoor spaces often allow staff to work outside, keeping them safe, and the public to visit in relative safety, if tourism is appropriately managed. In countries that have eased their lockdown regulations, outdoor activities are favoured by visitors. Several archaeological sites in Greece and Italy reopened in May, 2020 and the UK opened its sites in June, 2020 operating under specific health regulations that are adjusted according to the current requirements to protect staff and visitors. Here are some tips other heritage sites have implemented to ensure the protection of the premises, staff and visitors that may help you in preparing reopening scenarios:

- Simple floor markings on the ground are easily prepared and can help to guide visitors through the property and remind them to keep a social distance of a minimum of 1.5 meters. This is especially important in waiting lines, or any narrow areas. They are easily set up with simple material such as labelled adhesive strips.
- Visitors should be required to wear face masks in all indoor areas, and all areas that may be congested, and should be asked to frequently use antiseptic hand sanitizer – especially in gift shops, or when interacting with site staff (for example, at the entrance).
- Sites should consider how many visitors they can accommodate safely while maintaining social distancing: this may be far fewer than were allowed in before.
- Areas that are touched by many visitors, such as seats, handrails, cafes, and toilets must be cleaned regularly with antiseptic cleaner.
- It may be necessary to close some areas if they cannot be opened safely and kept clean.
- Visitors should be asked not to touch objects in the gift shop unless they intend to buy them.
- Staff who meet visitors (at the entrance desk, guides, or café staff) should wear masks, and remind visitors to keep a safe distance from them.
- A shift to so-called “slow tourism”<sup>5</sup> is recommended. This gives archaeological site staff the chance to develop more personally-oriented content for their visitors.

### Staff areas

Staff should be healthy before returning to work and be tested for COVID-19. Areas that are restricted to staff should also follow the strict regulations given by local authorities. Break rooms, canteens, and other settings that people may spend time in, may need to be closed in order to avoid staff socialising in groups. Outdoor spaces can be used to replace indoor meeting rooms. Staggered breaks on a schedule for employees may help to strategically plan break time frames for groups of people, in order to avoid bigger gatherings. Offering hand sanitizers and soap for cleaning hands and tools wherever possible, is essential to prevent the virus from spreading.

### Cafes and restaurants at archaeological sites

Cafes and restaurants are places with a high contagion risk as visitors spend a period of time in a closed room and are usually sitting close to each other with various spots that are usually touched by visitors. The reopening regulations for these places might differ to those for the general reopening of archaeological sites.

Here are some recommendations in case the state allows the reopening of restaurants and cafes:

- Ensure a distance of at least 1.5 metres between tables; this may require you to reduce the number of tables.
- Reduce the number of seats around each table to ensure that larger groups do not sit together.
- Offer antiseptic hand gel for visitors when entering the restaurant or café as well as enough soap in rest rooms for cleaning hands.
- Meet visitors at the entrance and guide them to their seats, ensuring that most areas in the room remain untouched (such as door handles and menus).
- Either cover menus in plastic so that they can be cleaned or have many copies so that each visitor receives a new menu. Menus should not be reused for at least 2 days.
- Make sure café and restaurant staff wear masks when they interact with customers.
- Encourage visitors not to pay in cash. Document visitors' contact details, including recording the date of their visit: this will allow the tracing of transmission of the virus in case a visitor tests positive for COVID-19 after a visit. Clean tables and chairs after each group of visitors have left.
- It may be necessary for the café or restaurant to serve take-away food and drink, rather than allowing people to sit inside.

Sites intending to reopen should stay in close contact with local authorities to ensure that state regulations are strictly followed when protective measures for staff and visitors are being designed. However, as the archaeological sector does not often receive rapid or direct attention, contact local authorities proactively in order to discuss the possibility of reopening. Propose various scenarios implementing regulated safety measures under which working could be possible and staff and visitors are protected. Overall, the health of people and the safety of the archaeological heritage sites should remain priority in all planning processes while keeping visitors and staff informed about all changes that relate to them.

## ***Resources***

### Lockdown

- *ALIPH Foundation (International Alliance for the protection of heritage in conflict areas)*. E-learning resources from the web for general heritage e-learning: <https://elearning.aliph-foundation.org/3/>
- *Chartered Institute for Archaeologists*. Coronavirus advice and information: <https://www.archaeologists.net/practices/coronavirus>
- *Cultural Heritage Agency*. Guidelines for Building Archaeological Research: <https://english.cultureelerfgoed.nl/publications/publications/2009/01/01/guidelines-for-building-archeological-research>
- *Heritage for Peace Arab Network for Safeguarding Cultural Heritage (ANSCH)*. Resources on archaeological sites and monuments: <https://www.heritageforpeace.org/resources/monuments-archaeological-sites/>
- *Heritage Foundation*. Webinar on Crisis Communication for Leaders: <https://www.heritage.org/event/webinar-crisis-communication-leaders-guidance-responding-covid-19-and-other-crises>
- *ICCROM*. Webinar series on issues related to COVID-19: <https://www.youtube.com/user/ICCROM07>
- *The Heritage Alliance*. COVID-19 Guidance Hub: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1p4w-6tGao9SmwDAfSB9yOY5482Tvmgz9miZyfn8XnNQ/edit>

- *UNESCO. COVID-19 impact and response tracker:*  
<https://en.unesco.org/news/culture-covid-19-impact-and-response-tracker>

### *Digital Heritage*

- *Archaeological Institute of America*
  - Multimedia Education Resources:  
<https://www.archaeological.org/programs/educators/media/>
  - Virtual Tours: <https://archaeology-travel.com/virtual-travel/>
- *British Archaeological Jobs Resource (BAJR). BAJR Guides (eLearning):*  
<http://www.bajr.org/BAJRread/BAJRGuides.asp>
- *Archaeology Skill Passport. Training Guidance for Future Career (Learning):*  
<http://www.archaeologyskills.co.uk/project/core-skills/>
- *Archaeology Podcast Network:*  
<https://www.archaeologypodcastnetwork.com/>
- *Arts Marketing Association (AMA). Digital Heritage Lab:*  
<https://www.a-m-a.co.uk/digital-heritage-lab/>
- *Charity Digital. Heritage Digital:*  
<https://charitydigital.org.uk/heritage-digital>
- *DigitalLearn*
  - Use a computer to do almost anything: <https://www.digitallearn.org/>
  - Tools and Resources for Trainer: <https://training.digitallearn.org/>
- *Heritage Fund. Digital resources for heritage organisations:*  
<https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/publications/digital-skills-heritage-digital-resources>
- *MediaTrust. Digital Marketing Strategy Toolkit:*  
<https://mediatrust.org/resource-hub/digital-marketing-strategy-toolkit/>
- *Nonprofit Tech for Good. A Fundraising and Social Media Blog for Nonprofits:*  
<https://www.nptechforgood.com/>
- *Social Media Examiner. A Guide to the Social Media Jungle:*  
<https://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/>
- *The Institute for Digital Archaeology. Publications on The Future of Digital Archaeology – overview of technologies, philosophy and ethical considerations:*  
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/54d141f5e4b032ab36c35a29/t/56c6234a2b8ddedda8543765/1455825741243/IDA+World+Government+Summit+Report.pdf>

### *Networks*

- *Arab Network for Safeguarding Cultural Heritage (ANSCH) Facebook group:*  
<https://www.facebook.com/ANSCH-110334927271070/>
- *Archaeology in Iraq Facebook group:*  
<https://www.facebook.com/ArchaeologyInIraqOfficial/>
- *Archaeology in Libya Facebook group:*  
<https://www.facebook.com/Archaeology.in.Libya.AiS/>
- *Archaeology in Syria Facebook group:* <https://www.facebook.com/Archaeology.in.Syria/>
- *Archaeology in Yemen Facebook group:*  
<https://www.facebook.com/Archaeology.in.Yemen.AiS/>
- *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](https://www.facebook.com/groups/214091372432295/?ref=br_rs)
- *ICCROM Sharjah* <https://athar-centre.org/>



## Safety

- *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>
- *Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). Prospect's COVID-19 site working advice (fieldwork):*  
<https://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/Prospect%20Archaeologists%20COVID19%20Working%20Advice%20V1%2004MAY20.pdf>
- *Construction Leadership Council. Protecting your workforce during coronavirus Site Procedures:*  
<https://www.constructionleadershipcouncil.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Site-Operating-Procedures-Version-4.pdf>
- *Federation of Archaeological Managers and Employers Ltd (FAME). Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Archaeology – Health and Safety:*  
<https://famearchaeology.co.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-and-archaeology/>
- *Safety measures of Greek archaeological sites after reopening:*  
<https://news.gtp.gr/2020/05/18/visiting-greek-archaeological-sites-post-covid-19-safety-measures-rules/>
- *Science Advances (07 Aug 2020). Low-cost measurement of facemask efficacy for filtering expelled droplets during speech:*  
<https://advances.sciencemag.org/content/early/2020/08/07/sciadv.abd3083>
- *The Reference Center for Psychological Support of the Red Cross*  
<https://www.redcross.org/about-us/news-and-events/news/2020/steps-to-help-cope-with-evolving-coronavirus-situation.html>
- *UK Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy. Working safely during the coronavirus – guidance on construction and outdoor working environments:*  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/construction-and-other-outdoor-work>
- *World Health Organisation*
  - About COVID-19:  
<http://www.emro.who.int/health-topics/corona-virus/about-covid-19.html>
  - Health Alert on WhatsApp (Arabic): [wa.me/41225017023?text=](https://wa.me/41225017023?text=)
  - Protection measures:  
<http://www.emro.who.int/health-topics/corona-virus/protect-yourself-and-others.html>
  - COVID-19 questions and answers:  
<http://www.emro.who.int/health-topics/corona-virus/questions-and-answers.html>
  - Resources on mental health:  
<https://www.who.int/campaigns/connecting-the-world-to-combat-coronavirus/healthyathome/healthyathome---mental-health>

## Security

- *Alliance to Counter Crime Online. Facebook group:*  
<https://www.facebook.com/CounteringCrime/>
- *ANSCH. Sources on Archaeological Sites and Monuments:*  
<https://www.heritageforpeace.org/resources/monuments-archaeological-sites/>
- *ASIS Foundation Research Council. CRIPS Report: Security of Archaeological Sites:*  
[https://www.asisonline.org/globalassets/foundation/documents/crisp-reports/archaeological-clunia\\_crisp-report.pdf](https://www.asisonline.org/globalassets/foundation/documents/crisp-reports/archaeological-clunia_crisp-report.pdf)

- *Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA)*. Coronavirus advice and information: <https://www.archaeologists.net/practices/coronavirus>
- *Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime*: <https://globalinitiative.net/>
- *Object-ID*: <https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/objectid/>
- *SmartWater Foundation*: <http://www.smartwaterfoundation.org/>
- *Terrawatchers*. TerraWatchers provides web-based, crowdsourced satellite image monitoring for critical missions related to current events: <https://terrawatchers.org/>
- *The ATHAR Project*:
  - Project website: <https://atharproject.org/>
  - 2019 Report: <http://atharproject.org/report2019/>
- *WikiHow*. How to Protect and Preserve Archaeological Sites: <https://www.wikihow.com/Protect-and-Preserve-Archaeological-Sites>

#### *Funding Possibilities*

- *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 to help 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 Patrimonies*. The Patrimonies funding initiative considers projects that focus on the preservation of historical cultural heritage first and foremost in crisis regions and, in some cases, should for the first time enable scientific research in the fields of history, archaeology, and art history. <https://www.gerda-henkel-stiftung.de/en/patrimonies>
- *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*. Helping to create a sustainable and resilient conservation community. You need to join ICC first. <https://www.iiconservation.org/about/awards/opportunities>
- *Prince Claus Fund for Culture and Development. Cultural Emergency Response (CER)*. Is cultural heritage threatened in your area? We may be able to help through our Cultural Emergency Response programme (CER). <https://princeclausfund.org/save-heritage-now>
- *UNESCO. Heritage Emergency Fund*. The fund is meant for UNESCO member states, thus government organisations, to enable the Organization 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](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. 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>

### Preservation

- *Archaeopress*. Archaeological Heritage Conservation and Management:  
<http://www.archaeopress.com/ArchaeopressShop/Public/displayProductDetail.asp?id={1F475AC3-ABB7-4642-A3FF-3BEBBD037DEE}>
- *Archaeological Institute of America*. Site Preservation Resources:  
<https://www.archaeological.org/programs/public/site-preservation/resources/>
- *Getty Conservation Institute*. Conservation, Community Planning and Community Asset Mapping:  
[http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications\\_resources/teaching/cs\\_tn\\_community.pdf](http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/teaching/cs_tn_community.pdf)
- *Heritage for Peace*. Resources on Monuments and Archaeological Sites:  
<https://www.heritageforpeace.org/resources/monuments-archaeological-sites/>
- *ICCROM*. A Laboratory Manual for Architectural Conservation:  
[https://www.iccrom.org/sites/default/files/ICCROM\\_11\\_LabManual\\_en.pdf](https://www.iccrom.org/sites/default/files/ICCROM_11_LabManual_en.pdf)
- *National Park Service (NPS)*. Archaeology and Historic Preservation:  
[https://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/arch\\_stnds\\_0.htm](https://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/arch_stnds_0.htm)
- *WikiHow*. How to Protect and Preserve Archaeological Sites:  
<https://www.wikihow.com/Protect-and-Preserve-Archaeological-Sites>

### Reopening

#### *Visitors*

- *Archaeology Travel*. Guidelines for Visiting Sites & Monuments during the Coronavirus Pandemic:  
<https://archaeology-travel.com/travel-tips/guidelines-for-visiting-sites-museums-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/>
- *Safety measures of Greek archaeological sites after reopening*:  
<https://news.gtp.gr/2020/05/18/visiting-greek-archaeological-sites-post-covid-19-safety-measures-rules/>

#### *Archaeological excavations and working environment*

- *Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA)*. Prospect's COVID-19 site working advice:  
<https://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/Prospect%20Archaeologists%20COVID19%20Working%20Advice%20V1%2004MAY20.pdf>
- *Construction Leadership Council*. Protecting your workforce during coronavirus Site Procedures:  
<https://www.constructionleadershipcouncil.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Site-Operating-Procedures-Version-4.pdf>
- *Federation of Archaeological Managers and Employers Ltd (FAME)*. Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Archaeology – Health and Safety:  
<https://famearchaeology.co.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-and-archaeology/>
- *UK Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy*. Working safely during the coronavirus – guidance on construction and outdoor working environments:  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/construction-and-other-outdoor-work>

For further resources, please see the resource section for archaeological sites and monuments of the Heritage for Peace website: <https://www.heritageforpeace.org/resources/monuments-archaeological-sites/>

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<sup>1</sup> [News] (23 April 2020). More than 130 Ministers call for support to culture sector in COVID-19 crisis response. *UNESCO World Heritage Centre* <https://whc.unesco.org/en/news/2106>

<sup>2</sup> [News] (17 August 2020). Monitoring World Heritage site closures. *UNESCO World Heritage Centre* <https://whc.unesco.org/en/news/2103>

<sup>3</sup> Harris, Gareth (24th June 2020). Facebook and Instagram ban trading of historical artefacts. *The Art Newspaper*. <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/news/facebook-bans-trading-of-historical-artefacts>

<sup>4</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/fightrafficking/1970>

<sup>5</sup> Slow tourism is based on the concept of speed. It involves travelling for a prolonged period of time at a slow pace, allowing the tourist a deep, authentic and cultural experience. It is a sustainable tourism that faces the over-tourism of the last years.

# Heritage Guidelines for COVID-19

## LIBRARIES & ARCHIVES

### *Introduction*

This chapter sets out the general situation of the libraries and archives in the target countries of these guidelines as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It will begin by describing the situation, before suggesting advice for libraries and archives staff responding to the crisis, with links to further resources. It is primarily aimed at staff of libraries and archives, or those interested in the effects of the pandemic on the libraries and archives sector of the target countries. Many recommendations and suggestions in this chapter are similar to the ones in the chapter on museums as they have many characteristics in common, in particular in the areas of safety, security and preservation.

In just a few short months, the COVID-19 pandemic has completely upended how libraries and library workers provide services. The COVID-19 threat is unprecedented and will continue to cause extreme disruption for staff, both personally and professionally. These Guidelines compile information and recommendations to help those responsible to ensure that collections, staff and visitors remain safe and secure. Many recommended protocols might seem very detailed. However, these come from emergency management plans and have proven to be very helpful. Much of the information is just to remind you to take action where you might forget because of the emergency situation – after all, it's the unexpected that always happens. Numerous organisations will be producing new protocols in light of the current situation by reviewing risk and resilience. Make sure to keep track of those changes and share them with staff and, if needed, with your visitors. Many recommended actions assume a developed organisation that works well; unfortunately, not all cultural institutions in the target countries will meet the presumed standards. In that case, choose those recommendations that fit your organisation best and are possible to implement to curb the effects of the COVID-19 virus. We recognize that knowledge about COVID-19 continues to evolve, and this may require you to adapt recommendations, so keep following the regular updates from professional organisations and adjust them when and where appropriate.

### *Lockdown*

Many libraries and archives were forced to close their doors to both public and staff due to the pandemic. Shutting down libraries has had a massive impact on the communities and its staff. The closedown is temporary, to support critical social distancing efforts, and will end once COVID-19 is under control. A lockdown does not mean all services will be halted – many libraries have online or telephone services. Neither does it mean that library workers can twiddle their thumbs while at home. Although the closure is temporary, until COVID-19 is under control, many sectors have chosen to ask their staff to work remotely, requiring them to carry out new or different work. Several library workers might be working from home for the first time in their current positions (for more information see *Resources Lockdown: Libraries – The Institute of Conservation (ICON) – Unable to do your normal work at the moment? Top tips for making the most of your time at home and American Library Association - A Crash Course in Protecting Library Data While Working From Home*). Anticipate changes in areas such as: visitor access, outreach and online services, finances and cash flow, reputational risk, security, preservation, and internal and external communications.

The top priority should be the health and safety of library staff, and the diverse communities they serve.

### Communication

It is essential to stay in touch with those who serve and those who are being served: communication is key in these unprecedented times in order to maintain a connection with the public that you serve about your site, ensure your staff remain well-informed, and, ultimately, to ensure an easy return to work for your staff and a smooth re-opening for your site. If you have a digital presence, you are advised to put up COVID-19 resources, including updates and the local regulations on your home page. Update all of this information regularly, but also explain why the closure is important, what it means for the community, how you are protecting your staff, and how you are planning to protect visitors if and when they can come. Make sure the information telephone number remains adequately staffed. Make sure to share your contact information to give people the opportunity to contact you with questions, concerns, or even ideas. This information should be available directly at the entrance to the building, and on online platforms such as your website, tourism websites, and social media platforms. (See e.g. **Resources** Lockdown: Library – *The Seattle Public Library* – Example of a Digital Response.)

Of course, do not forget to put up physical signs on the entrances of your building/s, communicating the reason for the closure. Communication with the community is not the only thing that you need to take care to do - stay in touch with staff on a regular basis, especially regarding their health situation. There are many digital services to communicate with staff, the professional community and library/archive visitors (for more information see **Resources** Lockdown: Libraries - *Heritage Foundation* - Crisis Communication for Leaders and Part III of the Guidelines - *Basic Digital Tools*).

### Activities

Libraries are gathering places and serve as integral parts of their communities. A great majority of libraries are involved in community crisis response: distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE), addressing food insecurity, and sharing accurate community information and resources. Responding to a growing demand, they have expanded virtual (messaging services, video chatting) and phone services during the crisis, to increase access to their services and support, whatever they may be.

A crisis can sometimes be an opportunity and staff can still work on alternative tasks during a lockdown, such as completing essential conservation tasks. It may also 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 site monitoring or public relations. Switching tasks can give staff a chance to learn more about the work processes of the institution, which can be very advantageous for the whole team. In addition, while a building is closed, the management team can make new plans and design new strategies related to running the library or archive, develop and update the site's online presence, or develop educational material relating to your collections. This is also the time where long overdue research can be finished. Make sure to start an awareness campaign, so that people become aware of what you are doing, and how important your work and collections are (For more information see Part III of the Guidelines - *Basic Digital Tools*). Listen to the needs of the local community (some additional suggested methods are detailed below) and get engaged in developing ways to help both them and the local authorities in their work.

Even if it does not relate to heritage work, providing such support can sometimes help to strengthen bonds with the surrounding community, which will have a positive effect on their relationship with the site. Offer other possibilities like online activities to show that you are taking deliberate action to still serve.

### *Libraries*

A library is also a place of learning, amassing knowledge, and accessing knowledge. We know library services are essential to community recovery and resilience, from bridging the digital divide to addressing learning loss to aiding job seekers and small businesses. Share with your public all that your institution already has to offer online, make them aware of the beauty of reading and knowledge. It could be awareness raising and marketing at the same time. Next, you are advised to put new content online in accordance with the needs of the library users. Think of access to skill-sharing sites, audiobooks, book discussion groups, eBooks, interactive webinars, magazines online, online learning, online reading sessions, lectures through an online streaming service, streaming music, videos and movies, weblog (blog) or video weblog (vlog) posts, web tutorials. There is so much you can offer your community, especially for public libraries. A good search on the internet will give the librarian an abundance of creative possibilities; a few examples of these activities are listed in ***Resources*** [Lockdown: Libraries – Online Library Activities](#).

Do not shy away from linking your customers to interesting content at other libraries. Keep as many programs open as you can, or, if possible, offer them digitally like changing summer learning programs from in-person to online. Next, you can make use of regular mail to inform the community of the material you have available. Many libraries have also become much more forgiving about item return dates and library card expirations. It is important to manage any new issues by introducing new procedures and/or policies. This will not only ensure smoother work processes but when the next disaster strikes, you will not have to re-invent the processes again. One idiom in library and archive risk management is: be prepared and stay prepared. Last, but not least, plan for re-opening your organisation. For more information see ***Resources*** [Lockdown: Libraries - Blue Shield Australia and AICCM – Closed by COVID-19? A Practice Guide for managers of heritage collections](#). Version 1.2 published 29 April 2020.

As staff is likely to be mostly working from home during while the library is closed, they should firstly attend to the current affairs of the library. However, there will probably be time to develop new strategies and plans or update their skills and knowledge. The online opportunities offered online are abundant. To be more present online see ***Resources*** [Digital Heritage](#). For more on continuing learning for librarians see for example ***Resources*** [Lockdown: Libraries – ALIPH Foundation – e-learning resources from the web](#), *Public Library Association – A COVID-19 Digital Archive* and, *Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives – Online classes*. Many library organisations and library colleges offer courses for free, particularly now during the COVID-19 pandemic, but you may have to make a thorough search.

It is good to realize that other libraries near you are also coping with the same problems. You could jointly plan protective measures or other activities. Hearing what other librarians are doing in response to the crisis can be a useful learning opportunity. Similarly, staff may find value in being part of a community of others going through the same situation. In addition to seeking guidance at regional or national level, contacting colleagues at the international level is unquestionably an asset to your professional network.

International allies and collaborative networks widen the scope of any cultural organisation. For example, crowd-funding will be much more effective if you can reach out to an international audience. A strong international network offers you more opportunities in the future as well. Networks can be created at a horizontal level – conservators, curators, librarians – or at a vertical level – heritage wide, like all library staff. Today social media is very useful to connect, to communicate quickly with, each other and to get organized in small groups. Next, create (closed) discussion groups on Facebook, LinkedIn (or similar) or join already existing groups. Be aware, however: many of them are not safe and anybody can „listen in“, and your data often will be used for commercial purposes without your knowledge. (For more information on discussion groups see **Resources** Lockdown: Libraries – Library Discussion Groups and for digital tools see Part III of the Guidelines - *Basic Digital Tools*.)

### *Archives*

Much of the above is equally valid for archives. At a time when many of us are adapting to social distancing measures, it is important to remain connected and share information, insights, and guidance. Let your users know what you have to offer and what they could use your records for. Generally, people are unaware that archives are more than historical holdings. Stimulate people to look at their own records and how to preserve them. Refer your visitors to, for example, other online archives and record holding institutions such as municipal, family, or business archives. (For more information, see **Resources** Lockdown: Archives (and Libraries) and *Archives Discussion groups*.)

The recurrence of both human-made tragedies and natural disasters, combined with the great speed of technological development, has led archivists to a new role in society - as stewards of contemporary information, as well as historical information. The record keeping community is acutely aware of the importance of capturing and preserving a record of this rapidly evolving situation. From individual diaries of life under lockdown, to the records created by public bodies and research institutions, it is important to ensure that we continue to collect a diverse and comprehensive account of events, decisions, and experiences. For more information, see below at **Resources** Lockdown: Archives - *Archiving the Present for Future Research*.

### *Safety*

In crisis management the health of staff is often overlooked. In addition to your paid staff, do not forget about the volunteers who work for you. Establish health and safety protocols for staff and volunteers and stay in touch on a regular basis while the institution is closed. (For more information on how to protect yourself and others see **Resources** Safety – Word Health Organisation – Protect yourself and others). Make sure you are well-informed about their mental and physical health, and support staff and volunteers where you can from home. The health of people must always be prioritised ahead of the preservation of heritage items.

Follow local guidance for hygiene and physical distancing. Share it, and keep your staff up to date with recent advice from government regarding changes to health, safety, and work practices affecting personnel, and changes to employment conditions. Do not forget that work is more than „just-a-job“; socializing on the work floor is an important part of any labour force, so consider ways for staff to socialise online, and try and consider safe ways for them to socialise at work. Digital tools can also be used for online social gatherings. (For more information on this see Part III of the Guidelines - *Basic Digital Tools*.)



To stay informed on the latest on the COVID-19 virus, see the updates of your national or regional authorities and at ***Resources Safety - World Health Organisation – About Covid-19 and World Health Organisation – Health Alert on WhatsApp (Arabic)***.

### Physical health

In order to stop the coronavirus from spreading, it is necessary for staff (and visitors) to frequently wash their hands, clean used surfaces and equipment, and keep a social distance of around 1.5 to 2 metres depending on the local guidance. Archives and libraries therefore need to ensure that soap and, if possible, antiseptic hand gel, are available for use.

Wearing a face mask or using barriers or screens to separate people from each other is important to prevent the virus from spreading through sneezing, coughing, or strongly exhaling air. A “back-to-back” or “side-to-side” working arrangement is recommended in offices with multiple people. Visitors and staff that do not feel well should stay at home and should not enter the building. Vulnerable groups who are at higher risk, such as people with severe illnesses, compromised breathing (like asthma), or who are over the age of 60 should remain at home to minimise their risk of infection. It is common practice today that before entering people are asked if they have any coronavirus symptoms. (To stay informed about the latest updates regarding the COVID-19 virus, next to national and regional updates from the authorities, see for international updates at ***Resources Safety - World Health Organisation – About COVID-19 and Health Alert on WhatsApp (Arabic)***. Several institutions have offered guidance on safety measures at working places including libraries and archives. See ***Resources Safety*** below for helpful sources. For more on masks see ***Resources Safety Aga Khan Development Network - COVID-19 information - Information on homemade and disposable masks and Science Advances (07 Aug 2020) - Low-cost measurement of facemask efficacy for filtering expelled droplets during speech.***

### Mental Health

As lockdown extends, stress levels continue to rise. Like elsewhere, tensions are increasing inside crowded homes. Violent conflicts and political instability have already claimed much of people’s resilience. Daily routines are broken, shopping is difficult, children must stay in cramped rooms, and discharge or salary cuts leave families with less income or, in some cases, none at all. Regular health services, including mental health care, have often stopped and people are not treated. Mental disorders from before COVID-19 are now getting worse. Clearly, the badly needed psychosocial support is seriously lacking.

Stress and anxiety are normal reactions in unfolding crises that severely affect the way people work and live. During times of uncertainty, it is therefore vital to pay attention to one’s own health and the health of others. The Reference Center for Psychological Support of the Red Cross recommends the following “To Do’s”:

- Fact-check any news that is being consumed and self-educate with accurate information;
- Maintain a daily routine to remain structured and do not lose sight;
- Acknowledge your own fears and feelings of helplessness without denying what is going on;
- Actively stay in touch with friends and family virtually in order to maintain strong relationships; seek help from others and offer them help if they need it;
- Take care of your own physical and mental health.

For more information on mental health, see at ***Resources Safety***.

## ***Security***

### Threats

The situations of libraries and archives differ in each country but it is clear that they are all extremely weakened as a result of previous neglect, underfunding, conflict, and other pressures. Key threats are mostly related to the lack of occupancy; however, the widespread increasing economic difficulties faced by many people, combined with the opportunities presented by the site closures and reduction in site security, has resulted in an increase in illegal activities threatening all types of cultural heritage such as vandalism, burglary, looting, and the ensuing illicit trafficking – archives are particularly vulnerable. As a matter of fact, several countries in the MENA region have reported an increase in vandalism and theft. Next to breaking and entering, other risks during lockdown are: flood, fire, pests, damp and mould, dust, and light.

### Preventive measures

During the pandemic, most libraries and archives have been closed to both the public and staff. Some buildings may remain partially open for essential personnel or, if the buildings are closed, staff might make visits to inspect the premises at regular intervals. Therefore, the first step in stopping threats from becoming disasters is to prevent them wherever you can. After all, prevention is better than cure. Thus, if your institution needs to close indefinitely, take the appropriate preventive measures. The main risks for cultural organisations during the pandemic-enforced closures are generally: flood, theft and vandalism, fire, pests, damp and mould, dust, and light. In perfect circumstances your institution will have an emergency management plan and have already assessed the risks typical for your organisation. If not, it is highly advised to take this opportunity to draw one up now. Search the internet for emergency/disaster management plans and you will find ample information and examples. At ***Resources Security - Securing the premises*** you will find *IFLA – Preservation and Conservation – Useful links (for Emergency Planning)*.

However, a warning is called for as many plans and recommendations have been designed within a western context and, often, for moderate climate zones (see ***Resources Security Securing the premises – Teijgeler – Preservation of Archives in Tropical Climates***). Risks are present all the time, but in normal times there are fewer worries because the building is occupied, and staff are able to respond quickly. When your time is limited before you are forced to close the facility, concentrate on the areas you feel are the biggest risk or biggest priority for your institution. Only do what you feel safe and comfortable doing.

A number of security checklists have been published. Many of them refer to museums but, on the whole, they are equally applicable for libraries and archives (for collection care see ***Resources Security - Preservation***). The checklists are divided into security checks for the exterior and the interior of the premises. It is important to complete as many of the checks as possible before you close, and then to continue to carry them out at regular intervals while the facility remains closed.

For the interior, you should check the following:

- check the window coverings (for example, are blinds down/closed or up/open)
- deploy glass security film which will slow down the perpetrators
- ensure lights are turned off except for security lighting
- ensure power is turned off where appropriate
- remove all fresh food from the premises - empty refrigerators and leave the door open
- check the climate control, including remote controls, temperature and relative humidity

- remove high-risk collection items from display, and make sure any items on loan, returned items and valuable items are placed in (and remain in) secure storage. Also, think about collection items with respect to windows and ensure that no collection items are vulnerable to smash-and-grab thefts
- secure valuables (cash boxes, computer screens, laptops and other electronic equipment)
- secure important sensitive documents and information
- test fire and security alarms
- ensure fire doors are closed
- make sure flammable materials are stored in fire protective storage
- cover collection items that may be vulnerable to light damage
- cover objects on open display/storage with dust sheets
- make sure water taps are turned off and dehumidifiers are turned off and emptied
- check for mould infestations and rodents and check pest traps
- clear debris and empty dust bins
- and as you leave, make sure doors and windows are closed correctly (that is, are they locked, closed against dust, or unlocked, ajar or open)

In all instances, it is of the utmost importance to check the procedures both before leaving the premises and in case of emergency. Additionally, make sure to establish a means and process to record and share the results of security checks between relevant colleagues. What it all comes down to is: check, check, and check again. (For more information, see ***Resources Security – Securing the premises***).

#### Securing the premises

The above checklist should be conducted when you close the building for lockdown, but if staff are working at the premises while it is closed to the public, or are able to visit it for security checks, they should continue to carry out those checks to ensure the premises remain secure. However, during the pandemic, there are additional factors to remember. To minimise the spread of COVID-19, a rota should be created to ensure staff attend the premises on different days to maximise physical distancing. In smaller organisations, at least two individuals might make occasional visits to inspect the premises at regular intervals. While inside, they should wear the proper protective clothes and equipment. (For a template checklist on the activities to be conducted during a regular site visit, see ***Resources Security - Securing the premises***). Make sure that these persons have proper papers in their possession to enter the building in the event they are stopped by the police or any other authority. One of the key determinative factors in solving theft is how much time passes between the burglary and the realization that an object is missing: the bigger the window, the less likely it is to be solved. In terms of physical security, it is recommended that institutions should consider installing temporary barriers at museum entrances to block entry and exit to institutions, which could slow down a theft and allow emergency services more time to respond to a break-in. As the target countries for these guidelines are countries in conflict, never forget the precautions you took before the COVID-19 pandemic began. (For more information, see ***Resources Security - Securing the premises***. In many respects, libraries, archives, and museums are facing the same problems during a lockdown and that is why occasionally you will find references that are, in the first instance, meant for museums).

A summary of measures to take for the exterior include a regular check on:

- close all external doors, windows, blinds and shutters and make sure they remain closed and secured

- check gutters and drains for potential blockages
- store sensitive materials and equipment, and ensure safe storage is maintained (including checks on flammable materials, power stations, and external equipment for air conditioning)
- check exterior devices for fire and security alarm systems
- clear debris, dust bins and food stuffs, and clean the gardens, so as not to attract rodents and other pest hazards
- demonstrate that the building is being monitored by maintaining walkways and landscaping

### Outside help

If you are lucky, the library or archive may have contracted a security service and they may still be on duty during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some institutions have contacted local authorities to request that police or security forces patrol the area to keep an extra eye on their premises. If this isn't available, one potential solution is community engagement.

During violent conflicts, heritage institutions have been helped time and again by the surrounding community. Why not appeal to them in this crisis to assist in protecting the buildings and collections of your institution? Students could help monitor academic libraries on the campus, readers living nearby could do the same with their public libraries, and schoolchildren likewise with their school, including the school library. If physical surveillance is not possible, you could resort to closed-circuit television (CCTV) or other electronic monitoring systems. The institution may already have such a device installed. Bear in mind that during the coronavirus crisis, it will probably be difficult to have it installed if it isn't already; besides, it is very costly. However, such systems may deter criminals, or allow you to catch them and recover your collections if it records them. In addition, it may allow you to detect whether someone has placed your facility under surveillance to check your security – however you will need to either monitor your premises in person, or check your CCTV feed regularly to see if you are being watched. Bear in mind, once you notice an irregularity, you need to have a follow-up plan in place – who do you warn? You should work with the emergency response services to develop procedures to handle such situations, and ensure all staff are aware of them. Nevertheless, even with electronic or in-person site-monitoring, some risks will remain, such as vandalism, burglary, lack of maintenance, and the standard threats to collections. (For more information on collection care, see *Resources Security - Preservation*).

### Digital Security

Billions of people are stuck inside their homes due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the world is becoming increasingly dependent on the internet. The race towards a connected world was already in full swing, and the outbreak has further highlighted the potential of the internet for tackling problems in the 21st century. This holds especially true for libraries and archives that are continuously digitizing data and making them available on the internet. Digital access today is vital for any library or archive. Long-term impacts of the coronavirus outbreak have, essentially, pushed people to become more comfortable with technology and the risks associated with it. Nowadays, a modern citizen requires some form of digital literacy to access information and libraries play a key role in this.

In the rush to migrate library workers to remote work during lockdown and to migrate physical library programs and services online, data privacy and security sometimes get lost. Unfamiliar settings, new routines, and increased reliance on third party technology all puts library data privacy at risk.

It is of the utmost importance that your organisation is aware of the risks, both for data exchange within the organisation network and data entering the network from outside. Thus, libraries and archives should take the necessary precautions to mitigate these risks. In the chapter *Basic Digital Tools* (Part III of the Guidelines), we have collected brief information on social media, digital communication services, digital filesharing, virtual workspaces, virtual private networks (VPNs) and decentralised solutions; we have also touched on privacy and security problems. We do not have the space here to go into detail on the very complicated issues of digital privacy and security. Fortunately, there is a great deal of technical information available on the internet, including material in the context of libraries and archives. (To get you started, particularly for libraries, see **Resources** Security - Digital Security, and **Resources** Lockdown – Digital heritage.)

## ***Preservation***



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Once the premises, inside and outside, have been checked and are secure, it still leaves the collection(s) to take care of when the institution goes into lockdown. During this indefinite timeframe, the collections are being held dormant, increasing the risk of general deterioration caused by the environment, pollutants, and pests, as well as reduced levels of preventive monitoring and control. While collections are not directly at risk, the pandemic complicates their care. For that, libraries and archives might need guidance to ensure that their collections are safely cared for and maintained during this unprecedented period. Collection care should form a part of your preservation plan and emergency collection care that is part of your emergency management plan. Often, preventive measures are part of these plans but in these Guidelines they have been dealt with in the previous paragraph under *Securing the premises*.

Again, if your library or archive does not have any emergency management plan, it is highly advised to take this opportunity to draw one up now (also see *Resources Security - Securing the premises - IFLA – Preservation and Conservation – Useful links (for Emergency Planning)*). The warning that most of these plans and recommendations have been designed within a western context and often for moderate climate zones, is repeated here (see *Resources Security – Securing the premises – Teijgeler – Preservation of Archives in Tropical Climates*). Emergency management plan or not, you need to have salvage materials ready. In this crisis, this not only includes materials to fight flooding or fire, but also extra personal protective equipment (PPE) to prevent contamination from coronavirus (see, for example, *Resources Preservation – Museum of London – Pocket-salvage guide* and *New Jersey State Library – Salvaging Library Materials*). Also, you need to assess the collection risks typical for your organisation, assuming the necessary prevention measures have been followed and implemented. At all times, it is wise to check the condition of the collections, perhaps using a sampling method for large collections. This way you can know the weakest points in the collection and take extra precautions. Document these points by taking video or photographs, especially in collection storage areas.

In times of COVID-19, all restoration projects will be halted unless your organisation has the option of continuing projects during the enforced closures. In this case, do so with at least two people (a „buddy“ system): before leaving the premises, staff should make use of the preventive and preservation checklists noted above. When leaving the premises, they should make contact (by phone, email, or a social media group) with the director or another nominated person to tell them that they have left the premises. They should use all senses, including sense of smell, to detect areas where mould might be growing and dust might be accumulating, and where extra ventilation or cleaning may be required – especially in collection storage rooms.

There might also be a chance to outsource restoration projects to conservators working at home. In that case, be sure that they follow the institution restoration standards and write a good contract. Like everywhere else, the conservation lab should be checked for any hazards. Conservation equipment should be cleaned before closure, and materials should be safety stored. Remove perishable conservation materials or lock them in well-sealed tins/jars as they are prone to deterioration and mould.

It is important to make a checklist of all actions concerning preservation. Keep control at all times, consult with staff, and divide the tasks. You will, hopefully, not need to resort to them but, just in case, if a violent conflict reaches the area of your institution, there are some rather radical ways to safeguard collections (see *Resources Security – Preservation – Teijgeler – Preserving cultural heritage in times of conflict*). Last, but not least, prepare for re-opening (discussed below). Being prepared prevents your library or archive suffering from surprises, at least as far as possible.

### Sanitation

Contaminated books and archives are something libraries and archives are not unfamiliar with. There are many techniques available to disinfect facilities and materials attacked by mould. In this case staff and users need to be disinfected, as well as the materials themselves. A virus is a different story, but it is not a new one. Throughout history, librarians and archivists have been battling the consequences of bubonic plague, tuberculosis, and other known contagious diseases after they realized that they were infecting their holdings. The recommendations below rest on the state of science as of July 2020.

As this strain of coronavirus is new, virologists and micro-biologists are still struggling with how this virus will develop and how to counter it. So please, closely follow the advice of library and archive professionals and associations as this can change overnight.

Once contamination is established, several provisions against the virus should be made and each has their own process and reasoning: sanitation of facilities, sanitation of materials and quarantine. However, the first and most important question should be: is there any contamination risk with my books or documents? The answer is simple and straightforward: there is. The coronavirus persists for a “few days” depending on the types of surface. The highest risk for collections comes from proximity to infected people. Consequently, the first measure to take is to minimize contact between people and the library and archive materials. It goes without saying that once a member of staff has contracted the virus and there has been direct or indirect contact with collections, the holdings have to be put in isolation just like the person him/herself.

### *Infection*

The most common way to contract the COVID-19 virus is, as we know, from other people. Therefore, that should be the first concern. Minimize the virus risks by keeping a close watch on your staff, following the general precautions on avoiding the virus and acting quickly when someone displays the slightest sign of a virus infection (persistent cough, temperature, breathlessness) see *Resources Safety - World Health Organisation – COVID-19*. If staff are at work while the premises are closed, carrying out tasks like checking security or finishing restoration projects, they should wear personal protective clothing and equipment, and only handle books and documents with gloves. Though, once buildings have been empty for several days (considered to be a minimum of 3 days) it is very unlikely that live virus will be present.

As air renewal (HVAC, draft) is a good way to mitigate the viral load in absence of people, rotation and centrifugal forces (book sorters, cleaning machines) on the shop floor, on the other hand, will increase the chance to contract the virus if it is present.

Transmission through surfaces is much less likely than person-to-person contact in an enclosed space for a long period of time, which is believed to be the primary way to catch the coronavirus. However, the possibility still exists that the virus could be spread by touching contaminated surfaces and then touching your nose, mouth or eyes. The longest survival of the coronavirus found so far has been five days on ceramics (dishes, pottery, mugs), glass (drinking glasses, measuring cups, mirrors, windows), metal (doorknobs, jewelry, silverware) and paper (the length of time varies, some strains of coronavirus live for only a few minutes on paper, while others live for up to 5 days).<sup>1</sup> It survives for much shorter periods on surfaces like aluminum (2-8 hrs.), copper (4 hrs.) porous cardboard (24 hrs.), textiles, and wood. The latest evidence shows that, in general, cool temperatures prolong viral persistence while very warm temperatures result in rapid loss of virulence. Low relative humidity, also prolongs virulence, but may reduce surface to surface transfer.<sup>2</sup>

Dust raised in such dry conditions can be problematic as it re-aerosolizes attached viruses. As elsewhere (such as shopping) these days the advice is: if you wash your hands several times a day, particularly after handling objects that others could have touched, the risk of transmission is significantly lower from an already low risk of transmission.

### *Quarantine*

Books and archives are not only isolated after infection has been determined but also as a precautionary measure to prevent contamination of collection spaces and

objects whenever possible. This is particularly the case with books that have been returned during the lockdown. They will not be stored on the bookshelves directly but put in a quarantine room. Make sure that nobody enters the room - put up a sign. There is some discussion on the length of the quarantine period but in general the minimum recommended period is 5 days and, to be totally safe, 10 days would be good practice. The same treatment will be required for archives. However, the quarantine period might change over time with new scientific insights. You can place the items on trolleys or put them in crates with a clear indication when they arrived. If a dedicated quarantine space cannot be established, staff can place items in bags until the quarantine period is over so that no-one accidentally handles the items. It is not advisable to tightly seal the bags because this can potentially create damaging microclimates. Clean and disinfect your quarantine space, if used, before using it for other purposes. Finally, when the library reopens, they should inform their users that all materials are quarantined for 72 hours, so patrons do not need to take any further sterilization steps.

### *Sanitation rules*

There has been a lively discussion on sanitation - we prefer to speak of sanitation rather than disinfection - of collection materials and collection spaces against the coronavirus. There is a difference between cleaning and sanitation. Cleaning is a general reduction of filth including viral and bacterial loads on surfaces which makes subsequent disinfection more effective. Disinfection/sanitation is the application of a solution or method that kills/deactivates any pathogens that remain after cleaning.

The first question a librarian or archivist should ask themselves is what needs to be sanitized, and why?

There is no need to clean or sanitize anything if the premises are fully closed during a lockdown. It is only when your institution is re-opening that you probably need to clean facilities and/or objects. When a few staff are partly working while the institution is closed, in a conservation lab for example, you might consider it, but the use of protective clothing and equipment should be sufficient. Still, if there is cause for sanitation, there are a few simple rules for books and archives.

### Books and Archives

Disinfecting collection objects is NOT recommended. Disinfecting solutions contain alcohol, bleach, or other chemicals that can damage many of the surfaces and materials in heritage collections. Although certain solutions might be appropriate for some materials, inappropriate use can cause permanent damage or fail to disinfect properly. Always consult a professional conservator before doing any kind of treatment and always use disinfectants that have been approved by appropriate authorities (for more information see the several resources in ***Resources** Preservation – Sanitation*).

To reduce the risk of viral transfer from contaminated objects to people or the opposite from infected people to object, object quarantine is always recommended. Wait until the virus deactivates naturally on surfaces before handling any objects or resuming operations.

When you do decide to sanitize:

- never forget to wear protective clothing and equipment; avoid direct contact with contaminated objects
- always remove the dirt first as only then are disinfectants most effective
- hand sanitizers could leave residues on objects and damage materials



- external surfaces of display cases that may have been touched by visitors must be cleaned. There is no need to clean inside the display cases
- be aware that different surfaces would require different lengths of time and different disinfectants in order to assess their compatibility; test first
- do not apply chemical disinfection as disinfecting solutions will damage many heritage materials.
- diluted hydro-alcoholic solutions or neutral soap can be used but must always be applied with controlled pressure
- nor should you utilize UV disinfection, ozone disinfection, electrostatic disinfectant sprayers, or powdered disinfectant.
- placing materials in a microwave oven is not recommended and may result in fire.
- do not use bleach on the surfaces; many cultural materials are sensitive to bleach.
- do not undertake large scale disinfecting actions of the entire collections, or entire museum spaces like wet fogging of a biocide solution
- use methods that permit controlled application of approved cleaning solutions and disinfectants
- after disinfection make sure to ventilate the space where sanitation has taken place to ensure that there is no accumulation of volatile organic compounds (VOCs)
- keep a record of what objects have been sanitized and when that is accessible to all staff

#### Facilities

There are also some simple rules for facilities. Best practice is to close off areas used by the infected person and increase air circulation with outside air, not air conditioning, which may simply circulate existing air.

Wait at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting all areas accessed by the infected person. If it has been more than 7 days since the infected person was in the building, further cleaning and disinfecting is not required (see the section on Sanitation - Quarantine above). It is possible to safely disinfect non-heritage surfaces – tables, desks, and shelves – that are used for work with collection artefacts or archival records. As with books and archives, confer with a conservation specialist first and ask yourself the question why you want to sanitize and which spaces you want to do so.

In case it is advised to clean and sanitize certain rooms and spaces in the library and archive building(s), e.g. when they reopen and as long as the pandemic lasts, there are certain rules you have to keep in mind:

- never forget to wear protective clothing and equipment; avoid direct contact with contaminated objects
- always remove the dirt first as only then are disinfectants most effective
- start with painted surfaces, door knobs, and hand rails. You want to note if they are metal or wood and if they have any unique finish.
- for cleaning make up a soap and water solution from a mild or gentle soap; soap has a polar end and a non-polar end and so it tends to pull things into solution; do not use dish soaps because dish soaps have other additives in them that can leave a film
- place the mixed solution in a spray bottle; take a paper towel, wet the paper towel, do not use cloth, with your solution and then wipe the surface or the railing; repeat after a minute
- heavily touched hard surfaces may need regular cleaning and disinfecting; hard surfaces are the easiest to disinfect and they are also the surfaces on which the virus can persist the longest and with the highest transfer concentration to skin

- disinfecting compounds (70% ethanol is recommended) and their application methods (wet spraying, wiping, contact times) have to be appropriate for the surface to which they are applied. Test first and be sure to consider the effects of overspray or dripping on any nearby collection items
- cleaning and disinfecting should leave no potentially harmful residues on surfaces that will come into direct contact with collection objects (e.g. reading room tables, shelves for storing artefacts)
- do not use fogging, either for single rooms or the entire building: it will deposit chemicals on all the surfaces, which may be unpleasant for people and could be very damaging for objects in the collection
- after disinfection make sure to ventilate the space where sanitation has taken place to ensure that there is no accumulation of volatile organic compounds (VOCs)
- removal of bookshelves or furniture from rooms that need to be disinfected is, in most cases, not recommended: handling and transport of collection objects brings its own risks, and the objects themselves could potentially be contaminated
- keep a record of what objects have been sanitized and when that is accessible to all staff

Finally, many advise collecting institutions to inform the public about their approaches to disinfecting collection materials and to ensuring staff and patron safety. When customers understand what institutions are doing to mitigate risk, they are less likely to attempt their own, damaging disinfection methods at home. (For more details see ***Resources Preservation – Sanitation***).

## ***Re-opening***

Eventually, the institution will be able to re-open. This, of course, depends completely on receiving permission from the authorities and that will differ by country and region. Re-opening is unlikely to mean that the pandemic has completely disappeared. Experiences with the spread of the coronavirus show that a so-called second wave of rising infections is highly possible, which may mean that you have to face closure again. There are no official guidelines on how to safely reopen libraries or archives– much depends on the local context. If all went well, the library or archive employed the necessary preventive measures before closing for an indefinite time (see above the section on ***Security – Preventive measures***). In fact, you could use these precautionary actions again as a checklist before opening. Is the security still OK, no forced entry, no broken windows, no hazards in the garden, etc.? (see above the section on ***Security – Securing the premises***) If, by any chance, the institution suffered from damage, repair that first. Take care of the outside before turning your attention to the inside of the premises. Plan cautiously for reopening the library/archive and take an approach based on your needs. Take your time to minimize mistakes and to regain the trust of the readers' community.

### Protective measures

Before re-opening, be sure that you have a proper Re-entry Plan. Both library and archive services, and the spaces themselves will look different to before the pandemic. Be sure to follow national or regional recommendations for environmental cleaning and disinfecting. Most actions for the inside of the building will be related to cleaning, possible sanitation, new lending and borrowing procedures, and staff and visitors protection.

Users should be assured that their safety is a priority; explain at the entrance how you intend to achieve that. However, in practice libraries/archives must consider how best to balance safety of staff and visitors.

Phased services will vary by community based on local guidance. Some libraries are exploring phased reopening, starting with curbside or no-contact service outside the physical building. Visitors can order books or records on the internet and receive a time frame when to collect them on the curbside near the building. At the same time, they can return the books previously borrowed. The returned items should be moved immediately to a quarantine room for at least 72 hours. Cultural heritage collections with significantly drier or colder conditions might want to extend the isolation period.

Other potential changes you could make to prioritize patron health include:

- consider how many visitors the building can accommodate safely while maintaining distancing: this may be far fewer than were allowed in before.
- control the use of entrances, passageways, stairs and lifts
- allowing appointment-only entry for visitors
- train security employees to temperature check before entry and to not touch visitor belongings during bag inspection
- visitors should be asked not to touch books or documents unless they intend to use / borrow them
- visitors should be required to wear face masks in all indoor areas, and all areas that may be congested, and should be asked to frequently use antiseptic hand sanitizer (for example, at the entrance), if appropriate
- consider stocking face masks and sanitary and protective equipment for sale
- limit capacity and computer use for visitors
- simple floor markings on the ground are easily prepared and can help to guide visitors through the property and remind them to keep a social distance of a minimum of 1.5 – 2 meters. This is especially important in waiting lines, or any narrow areas. They are easily set up with simple material such as labelled adhesive strips
- areas that are touched by many visitors, such as seats, handrails, and toilets must be cleaned regularly with antiseptic cleaner. This is particularly important for computer use, which may need to be limited, and computers should be cleared after each user.
- it may be necessary to close some areas if they cannot be opened safely and kept clean.

Check on and respond to the physical and mental health of staff returning to duty. Consider limiting the number of personnel who are allowed, at first, to enter the collection and storage areas. Limiting personnel numbers will allow time to observe and document carefully any traces of damage e.g. insect damage or burglary, before too many people come in and disturb possible evidence.

Hand sanitizers for both staff and visitors at the entrance are an accepted way to reduce disease transmission from incoming readers. Hand sanitizers, however, could leave residues on objects or records that could eventually damage some materials like paper. That is why hand washing with soap and water, at least for staff, is recommended over using hand sanitizer because the former removes dirt and oils and the latter does not. Dirt and oils can transfer to collections and stain or damage them. Staff should wear disposable gloves when handling objects and records. Before the pandemic, this was already common practice for handling valuable or vulnerable objects for both staff and readers and that precaution should be maintained. Review volunteer capacity as volunteers may be essential for the safe operation of the institution; some volunteers may be clinically vulnerable.

Other potential changes you could make to prioritize staff health include:

- staff should be healthy before returning to work and be tested for COVID-19
- staff who meet visitors (at the entrance desk, guides, or café staff) should wear masks,

and remind visitors to keep a safe distance from them; you may be able to installing Plexiglas shields between staff and patrons

- collections staff are encouraged not to touch books or documents unless absolutely necessary during this time. As few people as possible should be handling items and no two people should handle the same item
- areas restricted to staff should follow the strict regulations given by local authorities
- limit access to storage and workrooms to essential personnel only
- areas that staff may spend time in like break rooms, canteens, and other settings, may need to be closed in order to avoid staff socialising in groups
- take into account spatial distance of employees in work stations
- outdoor spaces can be used to replace indoor meeting rooms
- staggered breaks on a schedule for employees may help to strategically plan break time frames for groups of people, in order to avoid bigger gatherings

Be certain that all policies are reasonable and necessary for the safety of staff and members of the community. Workers who believe that their employer provides a safe and healthy workplace are more likely to report for work during a pandemic. Instruct employees and volunteers to stay home if they are sick, have high temperature or someone at home is sick. Enforce policies consistently and provide staff training on how to enforce them. Regardless of your reopening stage, test runs are an essential part of a transition to ensure staff comfort and patron compliance.

Consider the security implications of any changes you intend to make to your operations and practices in response to COVID-19, as any revisions may present new or altered security risks which may require mitigation

## ***Resources***

### Lockdown: Libraries

- *ALIPH Foundation (International Alliance for the protection of heritage in conflict areas)*. E-learning resources from the web for general heritage e-learning: <https://elearning.aliph-foundation.org/3/>
- *American Library Association (ALA)*
  - A Crash Course in Protecting Library Data While Working From Home (very comprehensive): <http://www.ala.org/lita/crash-course-protecting-library-data-while-working-home>
  - COVID-19 Response: <http://www.ala.org/tools/ala-covid-19-response>
  - Pandemic Preparedness – Resources for Libraries: <http://www.ala.org/tools/atoz/pandemic-preparedness#Professional%20development>
  - Online Learning: <http://www.ala.org/pla/education/onlinelearning>
  - Public Libraries Respond to COVID-19: Free webinar series <http://www.ala.org/pla/education/onlinelearning/webinars/covid-19>
- *American Library Association – Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL)*
  - E-learning: <http://www.ala.org/acrl/onlinelearning>
  - Guidelines, Standards, and Frameworks: <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards>
  - Professional Tools: <http://www.ala.org/acrl/proftools>
  - Guides: <https://libguides.ala.org/?b=g&d=a>
- *Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material (INC)*. COVID-19 and Collections Reference and Resource list: <https://aiccm.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/COVID-19-Resource-List.pdf>
- *Bibliotheca Alexandria* <https://www.bibalex.org/en/default>

- *Blue Shield Australia and AICCM*. Closed by COVID-19? A Practice Guide for managers of heritage collections. Version 1.2, published 29 April 2020 (very practical): <http://blueshieldaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Closed-by-COVID-19-version-1.2-29Apr2020.pdf>
- *Collections Trust*. Collections in Lockdown: <https://collectionstrust.org.uk/collections-in-lockdown/>
- *DigitalLearn*
  - Tools and Resources for Trainers: <https://training.digitallearn.org/>
  - Use a computer to do almost anything!  
<https://www.digitallearn.org/>
- *Digital Public Library of America* <https://dp.la/>
- *Heritage Foundation*. Crisis Communication for Leaders: Guidance in Responding to COVID-19 and Other Crises (webinar): <https://www.heritage.org/event/webinar-crisis-communication-leaders-guidance-responding-covid-19-and-other-crises>
- *International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)*
  - COVID-19 and the Global Library Field:  
<https://www.ifla.org/covid-19-and-libraries>
  - Key Resources for Libraries in responding to the Coronavirus Pandemic:  
<https://www.ifla.org/covid-19-and-libraries>
- *Institute of Museum and Library services (IMLS)*. Coronavirus (COVID-19) Updates: <https://www.imls.gov/coronavirus-covid-19-updates>
- *Internet Archive*. Open Library - National Emergency Library: <https://openlibrary.org/>
- *Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives*. Different online classes: <https://kdla.ky.gov/librarians/staffdevelopment/Pages/OnlineClasses.aspx>
- *OCLC Virtual Town Hall*. Libraries and the COVID-19 Crisis: <https://www.webjunction.org/events/webjunction/town-hall-covid.html>
- *Public Library Association (PLA)*. A COVID-19 Digital Archive: <http://publiclibrariesonline.org/tag/covid-19-and-libraries/>
- *The Institute of Conservation (ICON)*. Unable to do your normal work at the moment? Top tips for making the most of your time at home: <https://icon.org.uk/news/icon-trustee-pierrette-squires-acr-15-ideas-for-conservators-at-home>
- *The Seattle Public Library*. Digital Response (example): <https://www.spl.org/about-us/the-organization/leadership/a-message-from-the-chief-librarian>
- *Qatar National Library* <http://www.qnl.qa/home>
- *World Digital Library* <https://www.wdl.org/en/>

#### *Library Discussion Groups*

- *American Library Association (ALA)*
  - Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Discussion Groups: <http://www.ala.org/acrl/aboutacrl/directoryofleadership/discussiongroups/dgs>
  - Book Discussion Groups: <https://libguides.ala.org/bookdiscussiongroups>
  - ALA Electronic Discussion Lists: <https://lists.ala.org/sympa/lists>
- *Arab Network for Safeguarding Cultural Heritage (ANSCH)*. Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/ANSCH-110334927271070/>
- *Cultural Heritage Conservation Science Research and practice*. LinkedIn group: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/140198/>

- *Google Groups*. Libraries: <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!search/Libraries>
- *Heritage for All*. Facebook Group: [https://www.facebook.com/groups/214091372432295/?ref=br\\_rs](https://www.facebook.com/groups/214091372432295/?ref=br_rs)
- *National Archives*. Archives & Library Science Discussion Groups: <https://www.archives.gov/research/alic/reference/archives-resources/discussion-groups.html>

#### *Online Library Activities*

- *Bellingham Public Library*. SkillShare (example): <https://www.bellinghampubliclibrary.org/skillshare>
- *Harford County Public Library*. Digital Library (example for youth): <https://hcplonline.org/digitallibrary.php>
- *Henrico County Public Library*. Audiobooks (example): <https://henricolibrary.org/check-it-out/downloads-streaming/audiobooks>
- *With Kids Stuck at Home, Authors Bring Stories to Instagram*. (example online reading): <https://www.wired.com/story/coronavirus-covid-19-childrens-authors-readings/>

#### Lockdown: Archives (and Libraries)

- *Association of Registrars and Collections Specialists (ARCS)*. COVID-19 Resources: <http://www.arcsinfo.org/programs/resources/covid-19-resources>
- *British Library*. Middle East: <https://www.bl.uk/subjects/middle-east>
- *Cornell University*. Middle East and Islamic Studies Collection:
  - Digital collections: <https://middleeast.library.cornell.edu/content/digital-collections>
  - Research Guide: Manuscripts & Archives <https://guides.library.cornell.edu/MideastIslamStudies/ManuscriptsArchives>
- *Digital Library of the Middle East (DMLE)* <https://dlmenetwork.org/library>
- *International Council on Archives (ICA)*
  - Archives are accessible: <https://www.ica.org/en/what-archive/archives-are-accessible-search-the-map>
  - Archivists at home: [https://docs.google.com/document/d/16ubmmTtJ7oCjbUFI\\_75fqG9J62pul9dg\\_RCd\\_4au4tMw/mobilebasic?fbclid=IwAR0bzn2Tzao2xt64IEwRLDrbB6a1UGL3WHtO4z\\_AS0SnPGyGwTGci7xQhFak&urp=gmail\\_link](https://docs.google.com/document/d/16ubmmTtJ7oCjbUFI_75fqG9J62pul9dg_RCd_4au4tMw/mobilebasic?fbclid=IwAR0bzn2Tzao2xt64IEwRLDrbB6a1UGL3WHtO4z_AS0SnPGyGwTGci7xQhFak&urp=gmail_link)
- *MCN Blog*. The Ultimate Guide to Virtual Museum Resources, E-learning, and Online Collections - Digital archives & libraries: <https://mcn.edu/a-guide-to-virtual-museum-resources/>
- *Harvard University*. Middle East and Islamic Studies Library Resources - Archives and Manuscripts: <https://guides.library.harvard.edu/mideast/archives>
- *Hazine*. Middle East Archive: <http://hazine.info/category/archives/middle-east/>
- *Internet Archive*. Middle East: <https://archive.org/search.php?query=middle+East&sin=>
- *Library of Congress*. Sources for Historical Photographs of the Middle East: Holdings at Selected Repositories: <https://www.loc.gov/rr/print/resource/mepbibliographySAA.html>
- *New South Wales State Archives and Records*. COVID-19 and Recordkeeping: <https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/covid-19-and-recordkeeping>

- *Society of American Archivists*. Continuing Education: <https://www2.archivists.org/prof-education/continuing-education>
- *University of Oxford, St Antony's College*. Middle East Center Archive: <https://www.sant.ox.ac.uk/research-centres/middle-east-centre/mec-archive>
- *University of Wisconsin*. Research Guides - Middle East Collection: <https://researchguides.library.wisc.edu/Middle-East-Collection>
- *Queensland State Archives*. PJs, dining tables and public records: Working from home and COVID-19 (blog): <https://grkblog.archives.qld.gov.au/2020/03/30/pjs-dining-tables-and-public-records-working-from-home-and-covid-19/>

#### *Archiving the Present for Future Research*

- *International Council on Archives (ICA)*. COVID-19: The duty to document does not cease in a crisis, it becomes more essential: <https://www.ica.org/en/covid-19-the-duty-to-document-does-not-cess-in-a-crisis-it-becomes-more-essential>
- *Ithaka S+R*. Documenting the COVID-19 Pandemic: <https://sr.ithaka.org/blog/documenting-the-covid-19-pandemic/>
- *Mary Marshall Clark*. Oral History of Disasters and Pandemics (video): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DbyRhAcj5Sg&t=1s>
- *Mass Observation (UK)*. Document your experiences of Covid-19: <http://www.massobs.org.uk/about/what-s-on/205-covid19>
- *National Museum of Australia*. Door to store: Caring for your family history documents: <https://www.nma.gov.au/audio/door-to-store-caring-for-your-collection/transcripts/door-to-store-caring-for-your-family-history#!>
- *Public Source*. Collaborative archive of life during COVID-19: <http://covid19.publicsource.xyz/#>
- *Scottish Council on Archives*. Collecting Covid-19: <https://www.scottisharchives.org.uk/latest/news/collecting-covid-19/>
- *The Family History Guide* <https://www.thefhguide.com/project-2-memories.html>
- *The Society of American Archivists*. Documenting in Times of Crisis: A Resource Kit: <https://www2.archivists.org/advocacy/documenting-in-times-of-crisis-a-resource-kit>
- *University of London*. Department of History - Advice on remote oral history interviewing during the Covid-19 pandemic: <https://www.ohs.org.uk/advice/covid-19/>

#### *Archives Discussion groups*

- *Google Groups*. Archives: <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!search/archives>
- *Middle East Archive Project*
  - Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/middleeastarchive/>
  - Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/middleeastarchive/>
- *National Archives*. Archives & Library Science Discussion Groups: <https://www.archives.gov/research/alic/reference/archives-resources/discussion-groups.html>
- *Society of American Archivists – SAA*. Email Discussion Lists: <https://www2.archivists.org/listservs>

## Digital Heritage

- *Arts Marketing Association (AMA)*. Digital Heritage Lab:  
<https://www.a-m-a.co.uk/digital-heritage-lab/>
- *Charity Digital*. Heritage Digital:  
<https://charitydigital.org.uk/heritage-digital>
- *Heritage Fund*. Digital resources for heritage organisations:  
<https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/publications/digital-skills-heritage-digital-resources>
- *MediaTrust*. Digital Marketing Strategy Toolkit:  
<https://mediatrust.org/resource-hub/digital-marketing-strategy-toolkit/>
- *Public Library Association*. Digital Literacy:  
<http://www.ala.org/pla/initiatives/digitalliteracy>

## Safety

- *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>
- *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)*. Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). Coping with Stress:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>
- *Construction Leadership Council*. Protecting your workforce during coronavirus Site Procedures:  
<https://www.constructionleadershipcouncil.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Site-Operating-Procedures-Version-4.pdf>
- *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>
- *International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)*- Psychosocial Center  
<https://pscentre.org/>
- *Science Advances* (07 Aug 2020). Low-cost measurement of facemask efficacy for filtering expelled droplets during speech:  
<https://advances.sciencemag.org/content/early/2020/08/07/sciadv.abd3083>
- *The Reference Center for Psychological Support of the Red Cross*  
<https://www.redcross.org/about-us/news-and-events/news/2020/steps-to-help-cope-with-evolving-coronavirus-situation.html>
- *UK Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy*. Working safely during the coronavirus – guidance on construction and outdoor working environments:  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/construction-and-other-outdoor-work>
- *World Health Organisation*
  - Covid-19: [https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab_1)
  - Health Alert on WhatsApp (Arabic): [wa.me/41225017023?text=](https://wa.me/41225017023?text=)
  - Looking after our mental health: <https://www.who.int/campaigns/connecting-the-world-to-combat-coronavirus/healthyathome/healthyathome---mental-health>
  - Protect yourself and others: <http://www.emro.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus/protect-yourself-and-others.html>



## Security

### *Digital Security*

- *American Library Association - Library and Information Technology Association (LITA)*. A Crash Course in Protecting Library Data While Working from Home (free webinar): <http://www.ala.org/lita/crash-course-protecting-library-data-while-working-home>
- *Build Digital Capacity*. Twitter #BuildDigitalCapacity: <https://twitter.com/hashtag/BuildDigitalCapacity>
- *Center for Internet Security (CIS)*: <https://www.cisecurity.org/controls/cis-controls-list/>
- *Doist*. The Rise of Remote Workers: A Checklist for Securing Your Network (Blog): <https://doist.com/blog/security-checklist-remote-workers/>
- *Europeana Pro*. Strategy 2020-2025. Empowering digital change: <https://pro.europeana.eu/page/strategy-2020-2025-summary#introduction>
  - To follow the news on the project: <https://pro.europeana.eu/page/news>
  - To receive direct updates: [sign up to the Europeana Network Association](#).
- *VisionRI Connexion Services*. Cybersecurity post - COVID 19 - More internet means more threats: <https://www.devdiscourse.com/article/technology/988466-cybersecurity-post-covid-19-more-internet-means-more-threats-stay-alert-folks>

### *Securing the premises*

- *American Library Association*. Video Surveillance in the Library Guidelines: <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/privacy/guidelines/videosurveillance>
- *Arts Council England*. Security in museums and galleries: the museum security toolkit: [https://326gtd123dbk1xdkdm489u1q-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/TheMuseumSecurityToolkit\\_02.pdf](https://326gtd123dbk1xdkdm489u1q-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/TheMuseumSecurityToolkit_02.pdf)
- *Claire Fry ACR and Spencer & Fry*. Collection Care Guidance for Museums and Historic Properties during the Covid-19 Crisis: [https://icon.org.uk/system/files/public/collection\\_care\\_guide\\_for\\_museums\\_and\\_historic\\_houses\\_during\\_covid-19\\_updated.pdf](https://icon.org.uk/system/files/public/collection_care_guide_for_museums_and_historic_houses_during_covid-19_updated.pdf)
- *IFLA*. Preservation and Conservation – Useful links (for Emergency Planning): <https://www.ifla.org/preservation-and-conservation/useful-resources>
- *Museum Development East Midlands*. Museum Site Visit Template Checklist:
  - Guidance note: <https://mdem.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Museum-Site-Visit-Template-Checklist-MDEM.docx>
  - Video training session: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V69KXz7Zwx8>
- *National Museums Scotland*. Museum Social Stand Up (video): <https://vimeo.com/415619097>
- *Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service et al*. Assess and manage risk in collections care: <https://collectionstrust.org.uk/resource/assess-and-manage-risk-in-collections-care/>
- *Observatory Illicit Traffic*. Security in museums and galleries: the Security Audit: [https://www.obs-traffic.museum/sites/default/files/ressources/files/ACE\\_CT\\_Security\\_Audit.pdf](https://www.obs-traffic.museum/sites/default/files/ressources/files/ACE_CT_Security_Audit.pdf)
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- *American Institute for Conservation / Foundation for Advancement in Conservation*. Archives Conservation Discussion Group: <https://www.culturalheritage.org/membership/groups-and-networks/book-and-paper-group/bpg-annual-meeting/archives-conservation-discussion-group>
- *American Library Association (ALA)*
  - Handling Library Materials and Collections During a Pandemic: <http://www.ala.org/alcts/preservationweek/resources/pandemic>
  - Pandemic Preparedness – Resources for Libraries: <http://www.ala.org/tools/atoz/pandemic-preparedness>
- *Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material (AICCM)*:
  - Closed by COVID-19? A Practice Guide for managers of heritage collections that are closed at short notice because of an epidemic or pandemic: <https://aiccm.org.au/disaster/disaster-response/>
  - Collection care: <https://aiccm.org.au/conservation/collection-care/>
- *Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI)*
  - Caring for Heritage Collections during the COVID-19 Pandemic: <https://www.canada.ca/en/conservation-institute/services/conservation-preservation-publications/canadian-conservation-institute-notes/caring-heritage-collections-covid19.html>
  - Webinar: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AULQR\\_cyoKQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AULQR_cyoKQ)
- *Collections Trust*. Collections care in lockdown - Transcript of Q&A panel live streamed on 12 May 2020: <https://collectionstrust.org.uk/resource/collections-care-in-lockdown-qa-panel-2-video-and-transcript/>
- *Conservation Wiki*. Ten Agents of Deterioration: [https://www.conservation-wiki.com/wiki/Ten\\_Agents\\_of\\_Deterioration](https://www.conservation-wiki.com/wiki/Ten_Agents_of_Deterioration)
- *Foundation for Advancement in Conservation*.
  - Connecting to Collections Care: <https://www.connectingtocollections.org/>
  - Facebook Book Live Event: Collections Care and COVID-19: <https://www.connectingtocollections.org/collections-care-covid-19/>
  - COVID-19 Resource List: <http://www.connectingtocollections.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/C2CCareApril2020COVIDResourceList.pdf>
- *Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)*
  - Coronavirus (COVID-19) Updates: <https://www.imls.gov/coronavirus-covid-19-updates>
  - Presentation: Mitigating COVID-19 When Managing Paper-Based, Circulating, and Other Types of Collections: <https://www.imls.gov/webinars/mitigating-covid-19-when-managing-paper-based-circulating-and-other-types-collections>
- *International Council on Archives*. Archives Damage Atlas - A tool for assessing damage: <https://www.ica.org/en/archives-damage-atlas-tool-assessing-damage>
- *Juma al Majid Centre*  
<http://www.almajidcenter.org/index.php>

- *Museum of London*. Pocket-salvage guide: <https://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/application/files/9414/5615/4887/pocket-salvage-guide.pdf>
- *National Endowment for the Humanities*. Twitter COVID-19 Collection Care: <https://twitter.com/hashtag/CovidCollectionsCare>
- *New Jersey State Library*. Salvaging Library Materials - Resources for Salvaging Library Materials: [https://www.njstatelib.org/services\\_for\\_libraries/resources/disaster\\_planning/salvage/](https://www.njstatelib.org/services_for_libraries/resources/disaster_planning/salvage/)
- *Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative*:
  - COVID-19 Resource Hub - Collections Care During a Pandemic: <https://culturalrescue.si.edu/hentf/major-disasters/current-disasters/#section5>
  - Resources: <https://culturalrescue.si.edu/resources2/>
- *Teijgeler, R.* Preserving cultural heritage in times of conflict (2006): [https://www.academia.edu/10125438/Preserving\\_Cultural\\_Heritage\\_in\\_Time\\_of\\_Conflict\\_A\\_Tool\\_for\\_Counter\\_Insurgency](https://www.academia.edu/10125438/Preserving_Cultural_Heritage_in_Time_of_Conflict_A_Tool_for_Counter_Insurgency)

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- *American Libraries Magazine*. How to Sanitize Collections in a Pandemic (blog): <https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/blogs/the-scoop/how-to-sanitize-collections-covid-19/>
- *Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI)*. Caring for Heritage Collections during the COVID-19 Pandemic - Covid-19 contamination of collection materials: [https://www.cac-accr.ca/wp-content/uploads/dlm\\_uploads/2020/04/cci\\_covid-19\\_en\\_2020-04-17.pdf](https://www.cac-accr.ca/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/2020/04/cci_covid-19_en_2020-04-17.pdf)
- *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)*
  - Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/disinfecting-building-facility.html>
  - How COVID-19 Spreads: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-covid-spreads.html>
- *Library of Congress*. The Impact of Hand Sanitizers on Collection Materials: <https://www.loc.gov/preservation/scientists/projects/sanitize.html?fbclid=IwAR0H4TvdX9lgDVKCPDhD12hVv9phn7aZ-gxSus5HpTee7d85dHfck8paliA>
- *National Center for Preservation Technology and Training (NCPTT)*:
  - Covid-19 Basics: Disinfecting Cultural Resources (video): <https://www.ncptt.nps.gov/blog/covid-19-basics-disinfecting-cultural-resources/>
  - Covid-19 Basics: Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (video): <https://www.ncptt.nps.gov/blog/covid-19-basics-personal-protective-equipment-ppe/>
- *Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC)*. Disinfecting Books and Other Collections: <https://www.nedcc.org/free-resources/preservation-leaflets/3.-emergency-management/3.5-disinfecting-books>
- *UK Government*. Guidance - COVID-19: cleaning in non-healthcare settings outside the home: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>

## Reopening

- *American Library Association (ALA)*
  - Guidelines for Reopening Libraries During the COVID-19 Pandemic:  
<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/reopeningguidelines>
  - Guidelines on Contact Tracing, Health Checks, and Library Users' Privacy:  
<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/privacy/guidelines/pandemic>
  - Libraries Reopening: A Perspective of Best Practices\* from Around the World in the Time of COVID-19 (webinar):  
<http://www.ala.org/rt/irrt/initiatives>
  - Planning for Reopening Resources:  
<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/planning-reopening-resources>
  - Protecting Privacy In A Pandemic: A Resource Guide:  
<https://chooseprivacyeveryday.org/protecting-privacy-in-a-pandemic-resource-guide/>
  - The Privacy Perils of Contact Tracing in Libraries:  
<https://chooseprivacyeveryday.org/the-privacy-perils-of-contact-tracing-in-libraries/>
  - User health data and library privacy:  
<https://chooseprivacyeveryday.org/when-libraries-become-medical-screener-user-health-data-and-library-privacy/>
- *Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI)*. Caring for Heritage Collections during the COVID-19 Pandemic:  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/conservation-institute/services/conservation-preservation-publications/canadian-conservation-institute-notes/caring-heritage-collections-covid19.html>
- *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)*. Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/disinfecting-building-facility.html>
- *CS-AAM*. Collections Distancing Webinar 2020:  
<https://lnkd.in/eitqDNy>
- *National Museum Directors' Council (NMDC)*. Coronavirus COVID-19 NMDC Good Practice Guidelines on the Reopening of Museums:  
<https://www.nationalmuseums.org.uk/coronavirus-update/nmdc-good-practice-guidelines-opening-museums/>
- *Medium*. A Phased Reopening Plan for Libraries as COVID 19 Restrictions Are Lifted:  
<https://medium.com/@john.alan.thill/a-phased-reopening-plan-for-libraries-as-covid-19-restrictions-are-lifted-2d96885c0c1d>
- *OCLC – Webjunction*
  - Public Libraries Preparing to Reopen: Examples from the Field:  
<https://www.webjunction.org/news/webjunction/preparing-to-reopen.html>
  - Reopening Archives, Libraries, and Museums (REALM) Information Hub: A COVID-19 Research Project:  
<https://www.webjunction.org/explore-topics/COVID-19-research-project.html>
- *The National Archives*. Making plans for re-opening:  
<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/our-archives-sector-role/coronavirus-update/making-plans-for-re-opening/>
- *REopening Archives, Libraries, and Museums (REALM) project*:  
<https://www.webjunction.org/explore-topics/COVID-19-research-project.html>

- *Qatar National Library and IFLA*. Perspectives on sanitization from the Arab Region, and on re-opening strategies at the Global Level, and Netherlands: A Comparative View (webinar): [https://ala-events.zoom.us/rec/play/vJcufr\\_6rj83GtHAsQSDAvMqW9S5eqys1CIZqfIFzhrjAXADM1X0Y-BEZebbDeNIuepd-aTgsOBaSUC7?startTime=1591383547000&%20x\\_zm\\_rtaid=iIn9aCPvQ2OFFrUFTRQelQ.1595350777319.9411e2af6b247981fc8ad21c85bfd99d&x\\_zm\\_rhtaid=727](https://ala-events.zoom.us/rec/play/vJcufr_6rj83GtHAsQSDAvMqW9S5eqys1CIZqfIFzhrjAXADM1X0Y-BEZebbDeNIuepd-aTgsOBaSUC7?startTime=1591383547000&%20x_zm_rtaid=iIn9aCPvQ2OFFrUFTRQelQ.1595350777319.9411e2af6b247981fc8ad21c85bfd99d&x_zm_rhtaid=727)

<sup>1</sup> For other materials see Nazario, Brunilda (August 21, 2020). How Long Does the Coronavirus Live on Surfaces? *WebMD Medical Reference*. <https://www.webmd.com/lung/how-long-covid-19-lives-on-surfaces>. Notice that this articles partly outdates the recommendations by the *National Center for Preservation Technology and Training (NCPTT)*: Covid-19 Basics: Disinfecting Cultural Resources listed in ***Resources-Preservation –Sanitation***.

<sup>2</sup> See note 2

# Heritage Guidelines for COVID-19

## MUSEUMS

### *Introduction*

This chapter sets out the general situation of museums in the target countries of these guidelines (Iraq, Libya, Syria, and Yemen) that have resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic. It will begin by describing the situation, before suggesting advice for museum staff that is responding to the crisis, with links to further resources. It is primarily aimed at museum staff, or those interested in the effects of the pandemic on the museum sector of the target countries. The guidelines are compiled to serve as a tool to aid heritage practitioners and cultural institutions in responding to the double crisis – violent conflict and COVID-19 - that is affecting the daily operations of their museums. With evolving knowledge and updates concerning COVID-19, we are aware that these guidelines should also be an evolving tool. Many recommendations and suggestions in this chapter are similar to those in the chapter on libraries and archives as they have many characteristics in common, in particular in the areas of safety, security and preservation.

COVID-19 permeates our daily lives through the media and forces many countries to take precautions such as quarantines and the cancellation of many activities. It questions our certainties and will probably change our established way of life and the way that we interact with each other in the future. The closing of museums, restricted movement, and the distraction of law enforcement institutions and other authorities exposes heritage to greater risks. These will particularly affect those regions where museums are recent and few, and where structures are still fragile, including in the MENA countries. Museums have a special role in the resilience of societies in times of crisis. People depend on these cultural institutions for support and comfort. Coming into contact with culture is necessary for the self-development of individuals. Only then can we write a common history and see ourselves in the future. Physical accessibility of museums has never been as important as it is today.

### *Lockdown*

Many museums were forced to close their doors to the public after the spread of COVID-19; an inevitable decision that will have immense repercussions after almost 3 months of income loss. Studies from UNESCO and the International Council of Museums (ICOM) report that 90% of all museums worldwide have been forced to close temporarily due to the corona-crisis (May 18 2020) and suggest that one in eight of the 90% will be forced to close permanently<sup>1</sup>. Museums have also reported that they have had to cut down on staffing levels and reduce their programs once they reopen as a result of serious budget cuts. Some countries, mainly in the west, support their culture sector but their priority continues to be to give financial support to the economy. In order to mitigate these effects, some museums have been expanding their online presence, offering e-learning services and virtual tours amongst other services. Yet, half of the world population still has no access to the internet. Museum workers might also be working from home for the first time in their current positions. They should anticipate changes in areas such as: outreach and online services; finances and cash flow; reputational risk; security; preservation; and internal and external communications.

However, the top priority for museums should be the health and safety of their staff, and the diverse communities they serve.

### Communication

The current outbreak of COVID-19 is spreading anxiety and uncertainty among quarantined communities around the world. People are being asked to stay at home and to adhere to social distancing to limit the spread of the virus; consequently, activities that attract large crowds, such as visiting museums, are closing for indefinite periods. Cultural heritage has always been a powerful means for coping, a psychosocial support in times of wars, disasters, and pandemics. This moment of crisis is another opportunity for museums to support and reach out to their public. It is essential to stay in touch with those who serve and those who are being served: communication is key in these unprecedented times in order to maintain a connection with the public that is served, ensure staff remain well-informed, and, ultimately, to ensure an easy return to work for the staff and a smooth re-opening for the museum. In addition to boosting online learning activities, sharing digital collections, virtual tours, and online exhibits, museums are advised to support state emergency response efforts.

For example, staff should consider the museum's role as a public health information source - take advantage of the existing communication channels, or establish new ones (like social media, newsletters or websites), to provide pandemic related information and updates. If museums have a digital presence, they are advised to put up COVID-19 resources, including updates and the local regulations on their home page, and on other online platforms such as tourism websites, and social media platforms. Issue alerts to notify the public of changes to the museum status keep in touch with visitors and staff, and manage their expectations. Update all of this information regularly, but also explain why the closure is important, what it means for the community, how to protect the staff, and how the museum is planning to protect visitors if and when they can come. Make sure the information telephone number remains adequately staffed. Make sure to share contact information to give people the opportunity to contact the museum with questions, concerns, or even ideas. Of course, do not forget to put up physical signs on the entrances of the building/s, communicating the reason for the closure. As many museums are (partly) dependent on volunteers it is important to keep them involved in the changes museums must undergo. (See **Resources Lockdown** – *American Alliance of Museums (AAM)* - COVID-19 and Museum Volunteers).

In addition, keep up the two-way communication with off-site staff and especially keep track of their mental health situation. Encourage staff to follow online workshops and seminars. For more information, see **Resources Lockdown** - *Heritage Foundation* - Crisis Communication for Leaders: Guidance in Responding to COVID-19 and Other Crises (webinar); *UNESCO* - How to communicate on COVID 19 crisis (webinar) and Museums facing COVID-19 challenges remain engaged with communities.

### Activities

Museums have already responded incredibly well to the crisis, supporting staff and volunteers and ensuring their collections and spaces are safe and secure, as well as donating food and equipment to points of need. It's important to put the needs of staff and museum communities first in this crisis. As the lockdown continues, many museums, like archives, are starting to look at how they can document this extraordinary moment in time. They are looking to collect official signage and objects such as face masks, or are documenting responses to the crisis on social media platforms and elsewhere online

(for more information see **Resources Lockdown** - *Online Museum Activities - Atlas Obscura* – How Museums Will Eventually Tell the Story of COVID-19; *London Transport Museum* - Contemporary Collecting: An Ethical Toolkit for Museum Practitioners; *Museum of London* - Museum for London: Collecting COVID; *Science Museum Group* - Collecting COVID-19; *University of London* - Department of History - Advice on remote oral history interviewing during the Covid-19 pandemic).

In times of crisis, people count on cultural institutions for support and comfort. To fulfil this role, museums could develop creative activities to embrace local economic initiatives, as well as promoting and / or creating self-help networks using the symbolic power of heritage. Community should be at the heart of any activity in the heritage field, as it was *by* people that heritage was created, and it is *for* people that heritage is preserved and shared. Social media platforms give a unique insight into what people are generally interested in, as staff can study what questions people have and what content they find interesting. Engage the community in the museum's work - for example, invite them to send in questions about what they have always wanted to know. Share insights into particularly interesting artefacts or collections that the museum holds. Ask them what they would like to see in the future when the museum re-opens. Also, include the audience in the decision-making processes and integrate community perspectives in the museum's work. Often, people are more likely to help when they realize they can be part of the solution. This can be done simply, by posting questions on the institution's social media platform and asking people to respond in the comments section. Or the museum could create a poll with pre-determined options and invite people to participate in it. Listen to their views and try and incorporate them.

This pandemic is a historic opportunity to reinvent museum operations, programs, and activities to serve communities more effectively. Many museums and galleries have moved quickly to create huge swaths of online activities. They have also drawn on their existing resources, such as online collection portals and social media accounts (see **Resources Lockdown** - *Museum Discussion Groups*). Both the *Smithsonian* (Smithsonian Open Access, 2,8 Million images) and *Paris Musées* (Collections Portal, 331,864 works) have put works online since the start of the pandemic (see **Resources Lockdown** *Online Museum Activities*). Museums have also delivered new content, such as virtual exhibitions, curatorial talks, hashtags, podcasts, quizzes and virtual tours of their galleries via streaming platforms, and educational material for children and adults. While this indicates the ability to adapt to the crisis, it also highlights some of the structural weaknesses from before COVID-19, in that the sector lagged behind in developing digital content. This will, without a doubt, be just as true for our target countries that are still suffering from the „double crisis“ (see the many online-activities at **Resources Lockdown** - *Online Museum Activities - Family Days Tried and Tested* - Virtual museum visits; *International Council of Museums (ICOM)* - How to reach your public remotely; *Institute of Museum and Library Services* - Facing Challenge with Resilience: How Museums are Responding During COVID-19; *MCN (Blog)* - The Ultimate Guide to Virtual Museum Resources, E-Learning, and Online Collections; *Museum 140* - We strive to bring together museums and museum lovers; *Museum of English Rural Life (MERL)* - The history behind an absolute unit; *Rubber Cheese* - Useful resources for the attractions and travel industry during the Covid-19 outbreak; *World Digital Museum* - World Virtual Museum. Also see the resources listed at **Resources Lockdown** – *Digital heritage*).

A crisis can sometimes be an opportunity and staff can still work on alternative tasks during a lockdown, such as completing essential conservation tasks. It may also 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 site monitoring or



public relations. Switching tasks can give staff a chance to learn more about the work processes of the institution, which can be very advantageous for the whole team. In addition, while a building is closed, the management team can make new plans and design new strategies related to running the museum, develop and update the site's online presence, or develop educational material relating to the collections. This is also the time where long overdue research can be finished. Take advantage of social media tools to explain to the audience why cultural heritage in general is important, and what threats it is currently facing, in order to create awareness. Education actively change the way people will interact with heritage in the future. This doesn't just have to be about the museum. Do the collections relate to other institutions, sites or areas of the community that the museum could work with and mutually support? Start meaningful discussions with the audience about the role society can play in. Use relevant hashtags in order to be visible to communities of the same interest. Hashtags like #protectheritage, #cultureunderthreat, #culturalracketeering, #climateheritage or #unite4heritage are campaigns to raise awareness about the threats facing heritage worldwide; using them can help to enlarge the museum's audience and engage in online discussions. (For more information see **Resources** Lockdown *Digital Heritage* and Part III of the Guidelines - *Basic Digital Tools*.)

It is good to realize that other museums are also coping with the same problems. Staff could jointly plan protective measures or other activities. Hearing what other museum staff are doing in response to the crisis can be a useful learning opportunity. Similarly, they may find value in being part of a community of others going through the same situation. In addition to seeking guidance at regional or national level, contacting colleagues at the international level is unquestionably an asset to the institution's professional network. International allies and collaborative networks widen the scope of any cultural organisation. For example, crowd-funding will be much more effective if the museum can reach out to an international audience. A strong international network offers more opportunities in the future as well. Networks can be created at a horizontal level – conservators, curators – or at a vertical level – heritage wide, like all museum staff. Today social media is very useful to connect, to communicate quickly with, each other and to get organized in small groups. Next, create (closed) discussion groups on Facebook, LinkedIn (or similar) or join already existing groups. Be aware, however: many of them are not safe and anybody can „listen in“, and data often will be used for commercial purposes without the museum's knowledge. (For more information on discussion groups see **Resources** Lockdown - *Museum Discussion Groups* and for digital tools and how to use them see Part III of the Guidelines - *Basic Digital Tools*.)

## **Safety**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, economies and employment have completely transformed all around the world. Given the personal and professional uncertainties we are now facing, safe and healthy working conditions are becoming ever more important. In crisis management, the health of staff are often overlooked - it is essential that the safety of staff and volunteers is prioritized. See for more information **Resources** Safety – *American Alliance of Museums (AAM)* - 13 Tips for Working Remotely; *Museum Association* - How are museum staff faring during closures; *The Institute of Conservation (ICON)* - Unable to do your normal work at the moment? Top tips for making the most of your time at home; *Tickbox* - Time to focus on non-contact participation?; *World Health Organisation* – Protect yourself and others.

To ensure the well-being of staff and visitors alike, the museum needs to follow the recommendations of governmental and health institutions first. In addition, the institution needs to communicate with their staff and listen to their needs in terms of their health and working conditions. Not all staff are able to work from home, especially if they need to take care of their children or the elderly. Make sure to distribute the workload efficiently; productivity needs to be adjusted for this new reality. It's also important to communicate with staff during periods of closure. Establish health and safety protocols and encourage staff to focus on their own physical and mental wellbeing. As humans, we need social interaction and, with the current remote working, social dialogue becomes even more critical. Fortunately, social platforms are well developed and are accessible for many today (see Part III of the Guidelines - *Basic Digital Tools*). Other concerned parties are cultural bearers, artists, and crafts persons. In particular, artisans often have a direct or indirect relationship with museums in the Middle East and should be incorporated into museum COVID-19 policies (see **Resources Safety** - *International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property* - How to support cultural bearers, artists, and crafts persons during and following the COVID outbreak).

### Physical health

Precedence in all safety regulations should be given to the physical health of all staff, paid and unpaid, working in museums and the visitors, like in any other institution. To stop the coronavirus from spreading, it is necessary for staff to frequently wash their hands, clean used surfaces and equipment, and keep a social distance of around 1.5 to 2 meters depending on the local guidance. The institution, therefore, needs to ensure that soap and, if possible, antiseptic hand gel, are available for use. Wearing a face mask or using barriers or screens to separate people from each other is important to prevent the virus from spreading through sneezing, coughing, or strongly exhaling air. A “back-to-back” or “side-to-side” working arrangement is recommended in offices with multiple people. Visitors and staff that do not feel well should stay at home. Vulnerable groups who are at higher risk, such as people with severe illnesses, compromised breathing (like asthma), or who are over the age of 60 should remain at home to minimize their risk of infection. It is common practice today that before entering people are asked if they have any coronavirus symptoms. A good measure to prevent the spread of the coronavirus is to check the temperature of everyone entering. To stay informed about the latest updates regarding COVID-19, next to national and regional updates from the authorities, see for international updates at **Resources Safety** - *World Health Organisation – COVID-19 and Health Alert on WhatsApp (Arabic)*. Several institutions have offered guidance on safety measures at working places including museums. See **Resources Safety** below for helpful sources. For more on masks see **Resources Safety** *Aga Khan Development Network - COVID-19 information* - Information on homemade and disposable masks and *Science Advances (07 Aug 2020)* - Low-cost measurement of facemask efficacy for filtering expelled droplets during speech.

### Mental Health

We cannot compare events such as wars, earthquakes, or hurricanes, which destroy the daily life and infrastructure of entire nations. However, this current pandemic not only leads to isolation, it also divides families and communities, causing loneliness, and devastating human loss and sorrow. The main psychological public mental health impact is the rise of stress and anxiety levels, but in countries already facing political instability and conflict, levels of feelings of loneliness, depression, alcohol and drug abuse and self-harm behaviour are also expected to rise. Physical activity is limited, social interactions are lacking, salaries are cut, food is scarce, and children are forced to stay home in small spaces.

Adapting to new routines, especially working from home, also means isolation whilst juggling home life is creating additional stress. Access to services, including mental health and psychosocial support and care, has stopped, leaving people untreated.

The Reference Center for Psychological Support of the Red Cross recommends the following “To Do’s”:

- Fact-check any news that is being consumed and self-educate with accurate information,
- Maintain a daily routine to remain structured and do not lose sight,
- Acknowledge your own fears and feelings of helplessness without denying what is going on,
- Actively stay in touch with friends and family virtually in order to maintain strong relationships; seek help from others and offer them help if they need it,
- Take care of your own physical and mental health.

For more see at *Resources Safety Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)- Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). Coping with Stress; Disaster Ready Understanding Burnout During COVID-19. Self-Care & Resilience (AR); International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) - Psychosocial Center and World Health Organisation - Looking after our mental health.*

## ***Security***

### Threats

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 health crisis, 90% of the world’s museums have been forced to temporarily close their doors to protect their staff and visitors.<sup>2</sup>

Countries in conflict are already extremely weakened as a result of previous neglect, underfunding, damage, and other pressures. The need for isolation represents a huge challenge for museum professionals who must continue to ensure the security of their collections. Key risks are mostly related to the lack of occupancy in the buildings: criminals may take advantage of reduced staff presence on site, and the economic downturn may motivate criminal behaviour - in fact, several countries in the MENA region have reported an increase in vandalism and theft. In terms of the physical threats that the collections face, deterrents are important. Visible security cameras and signage indicating the presence of cameras can be powerful enough to put a criminal off, as can basic interventions such as bright lighting and fences. Next to breaking and entering, other risks during lockdown include untreated conservation threats - flood, fire, pests, damp and mould, dust, and light.

### Preventive measures

Risks are always present, but, in more normal times, there are fewer worries because the building is occupied and staff are able to respond quickly. But when time is limited because management is forced to close the facility, concentrate on the areas that are the biggest risk or biggest priority for the institution. Only do that which feels safe and comfortable doing. In perfect circumstances the institution will have an emergency management plan and have already assessed the risks typical for the organisation. If not, it is highly advised to take this opportunity to draw one up now. Search the internet for emergency/disaster management plans where ample information and examples are to be found. See for some guidance on disaster management *Resources Security - American Alliance for Museums - Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Response Plan; Collections Trust – Emergency planning e-learning tool; National Park Service (NPS) – Museum Handbook, Part I, Chapter 10: Emergency Planning (2019).* However, please be aware that many plans and

recommendations have been designed within a western context and, often, for moderate climate zones (see *Resources Preservation – Teijgeler – Preservation of Archives in Tropical Climates*) – these must be adapted to the needs of the museum in the target countries.

A number of security checklists have been published, many of which are designed to help management think through some of the security risks to the museum during lockdown. The lists are not exhaustive, and each museum will have its own particular circumstances, so not all questions will be relevant. Most checklists are divided into security checks for the exterior and the interior of the premises. It is important to complete as many of the checks as possible before the museum closes, and then to continue to carry them out at regular intervals while the facility remains closed. Additionally, make sure to establish a means and process to record and share the results of security checks between relevant colleagues. What it all comes down to is: check, check, and check again (see *Resources Security - Arts Council England – Security in museums and galleries: the museum security toolkit; Claire Fry ACR and Spencer & Fry – Collection Care Guidance for Museums and Historic Properties during the Covid-19 Crisis; Collections Trust – The Security Audit; Museum Galleries Scotland – Security Checklist – short version for COVID-19 lockdown*). In order to know what is missing in case of theft, museums should, of course, take regular inventory of their collections.

For the interior, please check the following:

- check the window coverings (for example, are blinds down/closed or up/open),
- deploy glass security film which will slow down the perpetrators,
- ensure lights are turned off except for security lighting,
- ensure power is turned off where appropriate,
- remove all fresh food from the premises - empty refrigerators and leave the door open,
- check the climate control, including remote controls, temperature and relative humidity,
- remove high-risk collection items from display, and make sure any items on loan, returned items and valuable items are placed in (and remain in) secure storage. Also, think about collection items with respect to windows and ensure that no collection items are vulnerable to smash-and-grab thefts,
- secure valuables (cash boxes, computer screens, laptops and other electronic equipment),
- secure important sensitive documents and information,
- test fire and security alarms,
- ensure fire doors are closed,
- make sure flammable materials are stored in fire protective storage,
- cover collection items that may be vulnerable to light damage,
- cover objects on open display/storage with dust sheets,
- make sure water taps are turned off and dehumidifiers are turned off and emptied,
- check for mould infestations and rodents and check pest traps,
- clear debris and empty dust bins,
- and as you leave, make sure doors and windows are closed correctly (that is, are they locked, closed against dust, or unlocked, ajar or open).

#### *Securing the premises*

Security issues are currently of great concern to all museums. In particular, communications with the police, which may, in consultation with the heads of museums, provide for enhanced surveillance around areas particularly rich in cultural heritage. The majority of museums already have security protection plans.

Nevertheless, a recent ICOM survey related to the COVID-19 crisis showed that staff at around 10% of museums believes that currently additional security measures are insufficient.<sup>3</sup> ICOM strongly recommends ensuring that procedures are adapted to confinement and availability of staff. For instance, museum management and security staff must establish a strict and clear list of staff those authorized to access the building, and the approach of vehicles in the surrounding area of the building should be prevented or restricted, if possible (with the help of the police). One of the key determinative factors in solving theft is how much time passes between the burglary and the realization that an object is missing: the bigger the window, the less likely it is to be solved. Therefore, management should make sure that security protocols and monitoring systems are maintained during lockdown and document all entry into the facility. In terms of physical security, it is recommended that institutions should consider installing temporary barriers at museum entrances to block entry and exit to institutions, which could slow down a theft and allow emergency services more time to respond to a break-in. As the target countries for these guidelines are countries also in conflict, never forget the precautions taken before the COVID-19 pandemic began (see for more information *Resources Security*. In many respects, libraries, archives, and museums are facing the same problems during a lockdown and that is why occasionally you will find references that are, in the first instance, meant for libraries and archives).

A summary of measures to take for the exterior include to regularly check to:

- close all external doors, windows, blinds and shutters and make sure they remain closed and secured;
- check gutters and drains for potential blockages;
- store sensitive materials and equipment, and ensure safe storage is maintained (including checks on flammable materials, power stations, and external equipment for air conditioning);
- check exterior devices for fire and security alarm systems;
- clear debris, dust bins and food stuffs, and clean the gardens, so as not to attract rodents and other pest hazards;
- demonstrate that the building is being monitored by maintaining walkways and landscaping.

### *Outside help*

If you are lucky, the museum may have contracted a security service and they may still be on duty during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some institutions have contacted local authorities to request that police or security forces patrol the area to keep an extra eye on their premises. During violent conflicts, heritage institutions have been helped time and again by the surrounding community. Why not appeal to them in this crisis to assist in protecting the buildings and collections of your institution? Museums are vital social platforms within their communities. When a museum is located in a residential area, residents themselves, confined to their homes, could be made aware of the need to inform the police in the event of suspicious traffic or noise in or around the museum. Make sure the residents know who to call and that the museum staff can react quickly in case of suspicious activity. If physical surveillance is not possible, the museum could resort to closed-circuit television (CCTV) or other electronic monitoring systems. The institution may already have such a device installed. Bear in mind that during the coronavirus crisis, it will probably be difficult to have it installed if it isn't already; it can also be very costly. However, such systems may deter criminals, or allow staff to catch them and recover collections if it is recorded. In addition, it may allow the museum to detect whether someone has placed the facility under surveillance to check the museum's security – however there is a need to either monitor the premises in person, or

check the CCTV feed regularly to see if the museum is being watched. Bear in mind, once an irregularity is noticed, the museum needs to have a follow-up plan in place – who do you warn? The museum should work with the emergency response staff and outside services to develop procedures to handle such situations, and ensure all staff are aware of them. Nevertheless, even with electronic or in-person site-monitoring, some risks will remain, such as vandalism, burglary, lack of maintenance, and the standard threats to collections.

### *Digital Security*

The increase in internet use has given museums the opportunity to reach out to wider audiences than has previously been possible. Digital transformation in the museum industry was already at its peak before the virus outbreak. In addition to enabling visitors to use tablets and smartphones to enhance their experience, museums have been digitizing their collections and making them accessible online. They have also been working on creating new channels to connect with their audiences before and after their visits (see **Resources** - Lockdown - *Online Museum Activities*). The pandemic has only highlighted the visibility and importance of this work, and the need for museums and their role in connecting to local and international publics in new ways. Digital access today is not only vital for museums but, during this time of crisis, online cultural experiences are becoming a lifeline for audiences.

The physical security of museums and galleries is not the only thing at risk right now, as more museums have rapidly transferred their day-to-day business operations to the digital marketplace. Unfamiliar settings, new routines, and increased reliance on third party technology all puts data privacy at risk. There has been an uptick in cybercrime across all industries and the (often less than tech-savvy) art world, particularly, needs to guard itself against attacks. It is of the utmost importance that the organisation is aware of the risks, both for data exchange within the organisation network and data entering the network from outside. In the rush to transfer the daily operations onto digital platforms, data privacy and security are getting lost in the process. The head of private client services and strategic risk and security at K2 Intelligence FIN, Jordan Arnold, has reminded museums not to neglect their cyber defences. He has said that museums should be wary of emails with links or attachments purporting to offer safety guidelines, preservation tips or even government bailout programs, which may turn out to be ransomware or other cyber-attacks. Arnold even predicts cyber criminals might set up hoax donation pages pretending to be in support of museums, galleries, and artists. He also points out that, while an in-person heist is limited to what a thief can carry out, it is easier to attack at any scale online. In the chapter *Basic Digital Tools* (Part III of the Guidelines), we have collected brief information on social media, digital communication services, digital filesharing, virtual workspaces, virtual private networks (VPNs) and decentralised solutions; we have also touched on privacy and security problems. We do not have the space here to go into detail on the very complicated issues of digital privacy and security. Fortunately, there is a great deal of technical information available on the internet. (For more information, see **Resources** Security – *Digital Security*; also check Part III of the Guidelines - *Basic Digital Tools*).

### ***Preservation***

During a lockdown, it is not sufficient to plan for the security of the premises and make sure that everything inside the museum stays secure (see above **Security** – Preventive measures - *Securing the premises*). Once the premises, inside and outside, have been checked and are secure, it still leaves the collection(s) to take care of, as several threats remain while the museum is closed.

In fact, there are increased risks from general deterioration caused by the environment, pollutants, and pests, as well as the risk of reduced levels of preventive monitoring and control, as no-one is present to observe them and limit them. While collections are not directly at risk, the pandemic complicates their care. It is important to assess the collection risks typical for the organisation, assuming the necessary prevention measures have been followed and implemented. Collection care should form a part of the preservation plan and emergency collection care a part of the emergency management plan.

If possible, two people should check the condition of the buildings and collections with a minimum interval of once a week. If local restrictions are tight, ask permission from the authorities to monitor the museum: the management team should prepare letters of permission for their staff to enter the museum.

During lockdown, check for the most obvious problems first, such as pest and mould infestation, water damage, dust, temperature (T) and relative humidity (Rh) and use all your senses, including sense of smell, to detect areas where mould might be growing and dust might be accumulating, and where extra ventilation or cleaning may be required – especially in collection storage rooms and exhibition halls. For large collections the museum could potentially use a sampling method - this way it can know the weakest points in the collection and take extra precautions. Turning off or blocking light in collection spaces, except for security lighting, can limit the effects of light and UV. It is also recommended not to move objects around. Climate control is a relatively easy way to mitigate some of the threats that collections are exposed to. Dropping the temperature a few degrees, if this can be done without increasing the risk of mould, slows degradation rates, reduces pest activity, and saves on heating costs. Decreasing air exchange rate provides a more stable, less dusty environment. To create a draft in the building is easy but, of course, increases the risk of burglary; however there are sometimes inconspicuous ways of doing so. In new buildings, HVAC systems can be monitored and adjusted remotely. Document these points by taking video or photographs, especially in collection storage areas.

Quite a few professional organisations have published guidelines on collection care during COVID-19, which can be found under ***Resources*** Preservation. If your institution has already a disaster management plan in place, emergency collection care should be part of that. However, if your museum has not been able to prepare and lacks a disaster management plan, it is highly advised to take this opportunity to draw one up now (for some guidance on Disaster Management Plans see ***Resources*** Preservation). Emergency management plan or not, the museum needs to have salvage materials ready. During the present crisis, this not only includes materials to fight flooding or fire, but also extra personal protective equipment (PPE) to prevent contamination from Coronavirus (see, for example, ***Resources*** Preservation – *Museum of London* – Pocket-salvage guide).

If pandemic measures mean the museum is closed, all activities in museums will be halted, including the restoration projects, unless your museum has the option of continuing projects. In that case, do so with at least two people (a „buddy“ system): before leaving the premises, staff should make use of the preventive and preservation checklists noted above. At the same time, staff should make contact (by phone, email, or a social media group) with the director or another designated person to tell them that they have left the premises. Similarly, they could take the task to monitor the premises and collections, taking the place of others who would have performed that duty. There might be a chance to outsource restoration projects to conservators working at home. If so, be sure that they follow the institution restoration standards. Before leaving, the conservation lab should be checked for any hazards.

Conservation equipment should always be cleaned, and materials should be safely stored. Remove perishable conservation materials or lock them in well-sealed tins/jars as they are prone to deterioration and mould.

It is important to make a checklist of all actions concerning preservation. Be sure to keep control at all times, consult with staff, and divide the tasks. The museum will, hopefully, not need to resort to them but, just in case, if a violent conflict reaches the area of the institution, there are some rather radical ways to safeguard collections (see *Resources Preservation – Teijgeler* – Preserving cultural heritage in times of conflict). Last, but not least, prepare for re-opening (discussed below). Being prepared prevents museums suffering from surprises, at least as far as is possible.

### Sanitation

Throughout history, museums have been fighting the consequences of bubonic plague, tuberculosis, and other known contagious diseases after they realized that they were infecting their holdings (see *Resources Preservation – Sanitation - American Alliance of Museums (AAM) - Lessons from History: Museums and Pandemics*). A virus is a different story, but it is not a new one. Today, we are familiar with infestations of different pests like rodents and mould and know how to disinfect facilities and materials contaminated by these vexations. In this case, however, staff and users also need to be disinfected and protected, as well as the materials themselves. The recommendations below rest on the current understanding as of July 2020. As this strain of Coronavirus is new, virologists and micro-biologists are still struggling with how it will develop and how to counter it. So please, closely follow the advice of medical and museum professionals and museum associations as this can change overnight.

Several provisions against the virus should be made, after contamination is established, and each has their own process and reasoning: sanitation of facilities, sanitation of materials and quarantine. Yet, the first and most relevant question should be: is there any contamination risk with my museum objects? The answer is simple and straightforward: yes, there is. The coronavirus persists for a “few days”, depending on the types of surface. The highest risk for collections comes from proximity to infected people. Consequently, the first measure to take is to minimize contact between people and the museum objects. Obviously, once a member of staff has contracted the virus and there has been direct or indirect contact with collections, the holdings must be put in isolation just like the person him/herself. If isolation is absolutely not an option, proceed with caution. In general, sanitation of museum objects is **not** recommended, due to the damage this can cause to the artefacts. For more information on cleaning and disinfection after Covid-19 contamination, see *Resources Preservation – Sanitation*.

### *Infection*

It is well-known that the most common way to contract the COVID-19 virus is from other people. Therefore, contamination by human agents should be the first concern. Minimize the virus risks by keeping a close watch on museum staff, following the general precautions on avoiding the virus and acting quickly when someone displays the slightest sign of a virus infection (persistent cough, temperature, breathlessness, loss of sense of taste/smell); see *Resources Safety - World Health Organisation – COVID-19*. If staff are at work while the premises are closed, carrying out tasks like checking security or finishing restoration projects, they should wear personal protective equipment (PPE), and only handle museum objects with disposable gloves. Once buildings have been empty for several days (considered to be a minimum of 3 days) it is very unlikely that live virus will still be present.



Air renewal (HVAC, draft) is a good way to mitigate the viral load in absence of people; but rotation and centrifugal forces (cleaning machines) on the shop floor will increase the chance to contract the virus if it is present.

Transmission through surfaces is much less likely than person-to-person contact in an enclosed space for a long period of time. However, the possibility still exists that the virus could be spread by touching contaminated surfaces and then touching your nose, mouth or eyes. The longest survival of the coronavirus found so far has been five days on ceramics (dishes, pottery, mugs), glass (drinking glasses, measuring cups, mirrors, windows), metal (doorknobs, jewelry, silverware) and paper (the length of time varies, some strains of coronavirus live for only a few minutes on paper, while others live for up to 5 days).<sup>4</sup> It survives for much shorter periods on surfaces like aluminum (2-8 hrs.), copper (4 hrs.) porous cardboard (24 hrs.), textiles, and wood. The latest evidence shows that, in general, cool temperatures prolong viral persistence while very warm temperatures result in rapid loss of virulence. Low relative humidity also prolongs virulence but may reduce surface to surface transfer.<sup>5</sup> Dust raised in such dry conditions can be problematic as it re-aerosolizes attached viruses. As elsewhere (such as shopping) the current advice is: if you wash your hands several times a day, particularly after handling objects that others could have touched, the risk of transmission is significantly lower from an already low risk of transmission.

### *Quarantine*

Museum objects should be isolated after infection with COVID-19, and as a precautionary measure to prevent contamination of collection spaces and objects whenever possible. When contaminated objects are put in a quarantine room make sure that nobody enters the room - put up a sign.

There is some discussion on the ideal length of the quarantine period but in general the minimum recommended period is 5 days and, to be totally safe, 10 days would be good practice. Be aware, however, that the quarantine period might change over time with new scientific insights. Items can be placed on trolleys or put them on shelves with a clear indication when they arrived. If a dedicated quarantine space cannot be established, staff can place small items in bags or wrap them up in appropriate material until the quarantine period is over so that nobody accidentally handles the items. It is not advisable to tightly seal the bags or tightly wrap the objects because this can potentially create damaging microclimates. Clean and disinfect the quarantine space, if used, before using it for other purposes.

### *Sanitation rules*

Sanitation - we prefer to speak of sanitation rather than disinfection - of collection materials and collection spaces has been a popular subject of conservation since the outbreak of COVID-19. The sales of disinfecting sprays and wipes have skyrocketed in recent months as the public have scrambled to more frequently disinfect commonly touched surfaces and items that could spread coronavirus. However, for museum buildings and objects different rules apply. There is a difference between cleaning and sanitation. Cleaning is a general reduction of filth including viral and bacterial loads on surfaces which makes subsequent disinfection more effective. Disinfection/sanitation is the application of a solution or method that kills/deactivates any pathogens that remain after cleaning.

Before we even consider sanitizing, we should ask ourselves why we need to and what needs to be sanitized? When the museum is fully closed for an indefinite time there is no need to clean or sanitize at all as there are no people present in the building and

the longest a coronavirus can survive on surfaces is 5 days. It is only when the museum is re-opening that it probably needs to clean facilities and/or objects. When staff are partly working while the institution is closed, in a conservation lab for example, they need to clean that facility before leaving, of course. The use of protective clothing and equipment should be sufficient to protect staff against the coronavirus. Still, if there is cause for sanitation, there are a few simple rules for museum objects.

### *Artifacts*

In principle, sanitizing collection objects is NOT recommended. Practically all disinfection solutions contain alcohol, bleach, or other chemicals that can damage many of the surfaces and materials in heritage collections. It is strongly recommended to always consult a professional conservator before performing any kind of treatment and always use disinfectants that have been approved by appropriate authorities. If there is any doubt regarding the cleaning and disinfection processes, it is best not to do anything as an incorrect treatment can cause irrevocable damage to cultural property. It is also good advice for museums to inform the public about their approaches to disinfecting collection materials and to ensuring staff and visitors safety (for more information see the several resources in ***Resources Preservation - Sanitation***).

To reduce the risk of viral transfer from contaminated objects to people or the opposite from infected people to object, object quarantine is always recommended. Wait until the virus deactivates naturally on surfaces before handling any objects or resuming operations. When the museum does decide to sanitize:

- never forget to wear protective clothing and equipment; avoid direct contact with contaminated objects,
- always remove the dirt first, as only then are disinfectants most effective,
- hand sanitizers could leave residues on objects and damage materials,
- external surfaces of display cases that may have been touched by visitors must be cleaned. There is no need to clean inside the display cases,
- be aware that different surfaces require different lengths of time and different disinfectants in order to assess their compatibility - test first,
- do not apply chemical disinfection as disinfecting solutions will damage many heritage materials,
- diluted hydro-alcoholic solutions or neutral soap can be used but must always be applied with controlled pressure,
- nor should you utilize UV disinfection, ozone disinfection, electrostatic disinfectant sprayers, or powdered disinfectant,
- placing materials in a microwave oven is not recommended and may result in fire,
- do not use bleach on the surfaces; many cultural materials are sensitive to bleach,
- do not undertake large scale disinfecting actions of the entire collections, or entire museum spaces like wet fogging of a biocide solution,
- use methods that permit controlled application of approved cleaning solutions and disinfectants,
- after disinfection make sure to ventilate the space where sanitation has taken place to ensure that there is no accumulation of volatile organic compounds (VOCs),
- keep a record of what objects have been sanitized and when they are accessible again to staff.

### *Facilities*

Cleaning and disinfecting museum facilities are not the same as cleaning and sanitizing office or household facilities. Best practice is to close off areas used by the infected person and increase air circulation with outside air - not air conditioning that mostly circulates existing air, which may contain the virus. Wait at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting all areas accessed by the infected person. If it has been more than 7 days since the infected person was in the building, further cleaning and disinfecting is not required (see the section on Sanitation - Quarantine above). It is possible to safely disinfect non-heritage surfaces – tables, desks, and shelves – that are used for work with collection artefacts. As with artefacts, confer with a conservation specialist first and ask yourself why you want to sanitize and to which spaces you want to do it (for more information see the several resources in ***Resources Preservation - Sanitation***).

If it is advised to clean and sanitize certain rooms and spaces in the museum building(s), e.g. when the museum reopens and as long as the pandemic lasts, there are certain rules the museum has to keep in mind:

- never forget to wear protective clothing and equipment; avoid direct contact with contaminated objects,
- always remove the dirt first as only then do disinfectants work most effectively,
- start with painted surfaces, doorknobs, and handrails. You want to take note if they are metal or wood and if they have any unique finish,
- for cleaning, make up a soap and water solution from a mild or gentle soap; soap has a polar end and a non-polar end and so it tends to pull things into solution; do not use dish soaps because dish soaps have other additives in them that can leave a film,
- place the mixed solution in a spray bottle; take a paper towel, wet the paper towel (do not use cloth), with your solution and then wipe the surface or the railing; repeat after a minute,
- heavily touched hard surfaces may need regular cleaning and disinfecting; hard surfaces are the easiest to disinfect and they are also the surfaces on which the virus can persist the longest and with the highest transfer concentration to skin,
- disinfecting compounds (70% ethanol is recommended) and their application methods (wet spraying, wiping, contact times) have to be appropriate for the surface to which they are applied. Test first and be sure to consider the effects of overspray or dripping on any nearby collection items,
- cleaning and disinfecting should leave no potentially harmful residues on surfaces that will come into direct contact with collection objects (e.g. reading room tables, shelves for storing artefacts),
- do not use fogging, either for single rooms or the entire building: it will deposit chemicals on all the surfaces, which may be unpleasant for people and could be very damaging for objects in the collection,
- after disinfection, make sure to ventilate the space where sanitation has taken place to ensure that there is no accumulation of volatile organic compounds (VOCs),
- removal of artworks or furniture from rooms that need to be disinfected is, in most cases, not recommended: handling and transport of collection objects brings its own risks, and the objects themselves could potentially be contaminated,
- keep a record of what objects have been sanitized and when they are accessible again to staff.

## ***Re-opening***

With public institutions reopening with permission of the authorities, the prospect of reopening museums under the current circumstances raises unprecedented dilemmas. Even though there are guidelines developed by renowned cultural and museum institutions, it is important to always consider the local restrictions put in place by the official health authorities and to keep in mind that every museum may need to take a different approach based on their circumstances. Before resuming their activities, museums need to be ready and plan ahead.

First, museums should consider how and when they should reopen to the public. The reopening must ensure minimal risk to the safety of staff, volunteers, and visitors. A gradual approach allows the museum to ensure health and safety while taking progressive steps to reinstate usual operations. It is important to realize that, even though the museum may desire to return to their pre-pandemic normal routine, the operations may require change and adaptation. Be open to modifying plans or even postponing opening dates. Visiting museums will definitely become more difficult, many people will not be comfortable with public gatherings in indoor places. A successful return to business will depend entirely on good communication with the local communities and working on public confidence. Good and continuous communication will be the key to reassuring the community that the institution is proactive in taking measures to protect their staff, local communities and visitors. The museum needs to check the outside of their premises before proceeding to care for the interior (see above ***Security - Securing the premises***). Check that there are no traces of forced entries, no hazards or broken elements in the building and no damage to the garden. This means that the preventive measures that were installed for security before lockdown are working and should be maintained even after reopening (see ***Security - Preventive measures***). A second coronavirus wave is expected and the museum may soon face closure again. If there is any kind of damage, repair that first and review these measures.

### Protective measures

Before reopening, be sure that your museum has a proper Re-entry Plan and a checklist to be reviewed beforehand. Several considerations need to be kept in mind including local context, public safety, worker's safety and wellbeing (including volunteers), risk assessment, personal protective equipment (PPE) and face coverings, building and process adaptation, transportation to the museum, etc.

Develop a phased timeline and a test run period where staff can assess risks and work on mitigating them. If staff are not completely ready, they can limit access to only certain areas of the museum to the public. Consider restricting capacity, especially in the first phase of reopening, to a level that management knows the site and staff can comfortably accommodate. Determine the opening hours and how many days a week the museum will be open. This might be influenced by the museum's ability to source masks, gloves, cleaning, disinfecting, sanitizing products and natural virus degradation. Consider different hours of operation for vulnerable populations (elderly or others medically compromised by other illnesses or diseases). Postpone access to the commercial and educational spaces located within buildings and postpone group tours (see for more at ***Resources Re-opening***).

Other potential changes the museum could make to prioritize visitor's health include:

- consider how many visitors the building can accommodate safely while maintaining distancing: this may be far fewer than were allowed in before, allowing appointment-only entry for visitors,

- control the use of entrances, passageways, stairs, and lifts,
- simple floor markings on the ground are easily prepared and can help to guide visitors through the property and remind them to keep a social distance of a minimum of 1.5 – 2 meters. This is especially important in waiting lines, or any narrow areas e.g. queuing for the entrance. They are easily set up with simple material such as labelled adhesive strips,
- train security employees to temperature check before entry and to not touch visitor belongings during bag inspection,
- remove any interactive objects and preferably cancel the use of audio guides,
- prioritize objects for exhibition that can be easily cleaned and maintained,
- visitors should be asked not to touch artefacts,
- visitors should be required to wear face masks in all indoor areas, and all areas that may be congested, and should be asked to frequently use antiseptic hand sanitizer (for example, at the entrance), if appropriate,
- consider stocking face masks and sanitary and protective equipment for sale,
- areas that are touched by many visitors, such as seats, handrails, and toilets must be cleaned regularly with antiseptic cleaner. This is particularly important for (interactive) media use, which may need to be limited,
- It may be necessary to close some areas if they cannot be opened safely and kept clean.

Check on and respond to the physical and mental health of staff returning to duty. Updates on the outbreak and advice on staff safety plays an important role before reopening. Instruct employees and volunteers to stay home if they are sick, have a high temperature or someone at home is sick. Consider limiting the number of personnel who are allowed, at first, to enter the collection and storage areas. Limiting personnel numbers will allow time to observe and document carefully any traces of damage e.g. insect damage or burglary, before too many people come in and disturb possible evidence.

Hand sanitizers for both staff and visitors at the entrance are an accepted way to reduce disease transmission from incoming visitors. Hand sanitizers, however, could leave residues on objects that could eventually damage them. That is why hand washing with soap and water, at least for staff, is recommended rather than using hand sanitizer because the former removes dirt and oils and the latter does not. Dirt and oils can transfer to collections and stain or damage them. Staff should wear disposable gloves when handling objects - before the pandemic, this was already common practice for handling valuable or vulnerable objects for both staff and visitors, and that precaution should be maintained. Review volunteer capacity as volunteers may be essential for the safe operation of the institution; some volunteers may be clinically vulnerable.

Other potential changes the museum could make to prioritize staff health include:

- staff should be healthy before returning to work and be tested for COVID-19,
- staff who meet visitors (at the entrance desk, guides, or café staff) should wear masks, and remind visitors to keep a safe distance from them; you may be able to installing Plexiglas shields between staff and visitors,
- areas restricted to staff should follow the strict regulations given by local authorities,
- limit access to storage and workrooms to essential personnel only,
- schedule longer-term exhibitions with objects that can remain on view for extended periods (not light sensitive),
- areas that staff may spend time in like break rooms, canteens, and other settings, may need to be closed in order to avoid staff socialising in groups,

- collections staff are encouraged not to touch artefacts unless absolutely necessary during this time. As few people as possible should be handling artefacts and no two people should handle the same artefact,
- take into account spatial distance of employees in workstations,
- outdoor spaces can be used to replace indoor meeting rooms,
- staggered breaks on a schedule for employees may help to strategically plan break timeframes for groups of people, in order to avoid bigger gatherings.

Be certain that all policies are reasonable and necessary for the safety of staff and members of the community. Workers who believe that their employer provides a safe and healthy workplace are more likely to report for work during a pandemic. Enforce policies consistently and provide staff training on how to enforce them. Regardless of the reopening stage of the museum, test runs are an essential part of a transition to ensure staff comfort and patron compliance. Consider the security implications of any changes the museum intends to make to their operations and practices in response to COVID-19, as any revisions may present new or altered security risks which may require mitigation.

## ***Resources***

### Lockdown

- *American Alliance of Museums (AAM)*:
  - 13 Tips for Working Remotely: <https://www.aam-us.org/2020/03/12/15-tips-for-working-remotely/>
  - COVID-19 and Museum Volunteers: <https://www.aam-us.org/2020/05/28/covid-19-and-museum-volunteers/>
  - COVID-19 Resources & Information for the Museum Field: <https://www.aam-us.org/programs/about-museums/covid-19-resources-information-for-the-museum-field/>
  - Using Scenarios to Plan Your Museum’s COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Response: <https://www.aam-us.org/2020/03/13/using-scenarios-to-plan-your-museums-covid-19-coronavirus-response/>
- *Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artefacts*. COVID-19 Resources for Cultural Institutions: Advocacy, Communications, Funding, Professional development: <https://ccaaha.org/covid-19-resources-cultural-institutions>
- *EU-LAC-MUSEUMS*: <https://eulacmuseums.net/index.php>
- *Heritage Foundation*. Crisis Communication for Leaders: Guidance in Responding to COVID-19 and Other Crises (webinar): <https://www.heritage.org/event/webinar-crisis-communication-leaders-guidance-responding-covid-19-and-other-crises>
- *International Council of Museums (ICOM)*:
  - Recommendations and resources: <https://icom.museum/en/covid-19/>
  - Museums, museum professionals and COVID-19 (report): <https://icom.museum/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Report-Museums-and-COVID-19.pdf>
- *Institute of Museum and Library Services*. COVID-19 Resources for Libraries and Museums: <https://www.imls.gov/coronavirus-covid-19-updates/covid-19-resources-libraries-and-museums>

- *Museum of London*. Covid-19: Resources and Information: [https://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/download\\_file/view/8633/2171](https://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/download_file/view/8633/2171)
- *Museum Study*. Cultural Institution Crisis Response (free course, login needed): <http://www.museumstudy.com/courses/course-list/cultural-institution-crisis-response/>
- *The Network of European Museum Organisations*. Museums during COVID-19: <https://www.ne-mo.org/advocacy/our-advocacy-work/museums-during-covid-19.html>
- *UNESCO*:
  - How to communicate on COVID 19 crisis (webinar): <https://en.unesco.org/news/how-communicate-covid-19-crisis-webinar>
  - Museums around the world in the face of COVID-19 (report): <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373530>
  - Museums facing COVID-19 challenges remain engaged with communities: <https://en.unesco.org/news/museums-facing-covid-19-challenges-remain-engaged-communities>
- *World Health Organisation*. EPI-WIN: WHO Information Network for Epidemics: <https://www.who.int/teams/risk-communication>

#### *Museum Discussion Groups*

- *Arts Marketing Association Coronavirus Support*. Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/AMACommunitySupport/>
- *Collections Stewardship*. Listserve: <https://www.collectionsstewardship.org/listserve>
- *Cultural Heritage Conservation Science. Research and practice*. LinkedIn group: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/140198/>
- *Cultural leaders*: <https://www.weforum.org/communities/cultural-leaders>
- *Heritage for All*. Facebook group: [https://www.facebook.com/groups/214091372432295/?ref=br\\_rs](https://www.facebook.com/groups/214091372432295/?ref=br_rs)
- *International Council on Museums Arab*. Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1207313432621070/>
- *World Economic Forum*. Arts & Culture Global Solidarity Network: <https://www.weforum.org/covid-action-platform/projects/arts-culture-global-solidarity-network>

#### *Online Museum Activities*

- *Atlas Obscura*. How Museums Will Eventually Tell the Story of COVID-19: <https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/coronavirus-museum-collections>
- *Aliph*. E-learning resources from the web (heritage general): <https://elearning.aliph-foundation.org/3/>
- *Family Days Tried and Tested*. Virtual museum visits: <https://www.familydaystriedandtested.com/free-virtual-tours-of-world-museums-educational-sites-galleries-for-children/>
- *International Council of Museums (ICOM)*. How to reach your public remotely (many examples of nice experiments): <https://icom.museum/en/covid-19/resources/how-to-reach-your-public-remotely/>
- *Institute of Museum and Library Services*. Facing Challenge with Resilience: How Museums are Responding During COVID-19 (Blog): <https://www.imls.gov/blog/2020/04/facing-challenge-resilience-how-museums-are-responding-during-covid-19>

- *London Transport Museum*. Contemporary Collecting: An Ethical Toolkit for Museum Practitioners:  
<https://blog.ltmuseum.co.uk/2020/03/31/contemporary-collecting-an-ethical-toolkit-for-museum-practitioners/>
- *MCN (Blog)*. The Ultimate Guide to Virtual Museum Resources, E-Learning, and Online Collections:  
<https://mcn.edu/a-guide-to-virtual-museum-resources/>
- *Museum 140*. We strive to bring together museums and museum lovers:
  - Homepage: <http://www.museum140.com/>
  - Adopt-a-Museum: <http://www.museum140.com/portfolio/adopt-a-museum/>
  - Museums on Instagram: <http://www.museum140.com/resources/>
- *Museum of London*. Museum for London: Collecting COVID:  
<https://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/discover/museum-for-london-collecting-covid>
- *Museum of English Rural Life (MERL)*. The history behind an absolute unit:  
<https://merl.reading.ac.uk/news-and-views/2018/04/history-behind-absolute-unit/>
- *Rubber Cheese*. Useful resources for the attractions and travel industry during the Covid-19 outbreak:  
<https://www.rubbercheese.com/insights/useful-resources-for-the-attractions-and-travel-industry-during-the-covid-19-outbreak/>
- *Science Museum Group*. Collecting COVID-19:  
<https://www.sciencemuseumgroup.org.uk/project/collecting-covid-19/>
- *University of London*. Department of History - Advice on remote oral history interviewing during the Covid-19 pandemic:  
<https://www.ohs.org.uk/advice/covid-19/>
- *World Digital Museum* <http://www.worldvirtualmuseum.com/>

### *Digital Heritage*

- *Arts Council England*. Digital Culture Network (free resources):  
<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/digital-culture-network/resources-support-events#section-1>
- *Arts Marketing Association (AMA)*. Digital Heritage Lab:  
<https://www.a-m-a.co.uk/digital-heritage-lab/>
- *Charity Digital*. Heritage Digital:  
<https://charitydigital.org.uk/heritage-digital>
- *Digital engagement in culture, heritage and the arts (Jasper Visser /Jim Richardson)*:  
[https://digitalengagementframework.com/digenfra3/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Digital\\_engagement\\_in\\_culture\\_heritage\\_and\\_the\\_arts.pdf](https://digitalengagementframework.com/digenfra3/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Digital_engagement_in_culture_heritage_and_the_arts.pdf)
- *DigitalLearn*:
  - Tools and Resources for Trainers: <https://training.digitallearn.org/>
  - Use a computer to do almost anything!: <https://www.digitallearn.org/>
- *Digital Pathways*. Resources to help museum people understand and use digital tools and channels, hand-picked by Culture24:  
<https://digipathways.co.uk/>
- *Drake Music*. Digital Accessibility – A call to action:  
<https://www.drakemusic.org/blog/becky-morris-knight/digital-accessibility-a-call-to-action/>
- *Heritage Fund*. Digital resources for heritage organisations:  
<https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/publications/digital-skills-heritage-digital-resources>



- *MediaTrust*. Digital Marketing Strategy Toolkit:  
<https://mediatrust.org/resource-hub/digital-marketing-strategy-toolkit/>
- *Museums Association*. How can digital platforms help museums connect to audiences during Covid-19 emergency?:  
<https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2020/03/19032020-how-digital-platforms-be-used-to-support-musems-during-covid-19-crisis/>
- *New Generation Applications*. Digital transformation in the cultural sector (blog):  
<https://www.newgenapps.com/blog/digital-transformation-in-the-cultural-sector/>
- *Nonprofit Tech for Good*. A Fundraising and Social Media Blog for Nonprofits:  
<https://www.nptechforgood.com/>
- *Social Media Examiner*. A Guide to the Social Media Jungle:  
<https://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/>
- *The Spektrix Ticket Converter* (free tool):  
<https://support.spektrix.com/hc/en-us/articles/360006701377>

## Safety

- *American Alliance of Museums (AAM)*:
  - 13 Tips for Working Remotely:  
<https://www.aam-us.org/2020/03/12/15-tips-for-working-remotely/>
- *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>
- *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)*. Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). Coping with Stress:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>
- *Construction Leadership Council*. Protecting your workforce during coronavirus Site Procedures:  
<https://www.constructionleadershipcouncil.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Site-Operating-Procedures-Version-4.pdf>
- *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>
- *International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)*. Psychosocial Center:  
<https://pscentre.org/>
- *International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM)*. How to support cultural bearers, artists, and crafts persons during and following the COVID outbreak:  
<https://www.iccrom.org/how-support-cultural-bearers-artists-and-crafts-persons-during-and-following-covid-outbreak>
- *Museum Association*. How are museum staff faring during closures:  
<https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/analysis/2020/03/25032020-how-are-museum-staff-faring-during-closures/>

- *Science Advances* (07 Aug 2020). Low-cost measurement of facemask efficacy for filtering expelled droplets during speech:  
<https://advances.sciencemag.org/content/early/2020/08/07/sciadv.abd3083>
- *The Institute of Conservation (ICON)*. Unable to do your normal work at the moment? Top tips for making the most of your time at home:  
<https://icon.org.uk/news/icon-trustee-pierrette-squires-acr-15-ideas-for-conservators-at-home>
- *Tickbox*. Time to focus on non-contact participation?:  
<https://www.tickboxmarketing.co.uk/time-to-focus-on-non-contact-participation/>
- *UK Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy*. Working safely during the coronavirus – guidance on construction and outdoor working environments:  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/construction-and-other-outdoor-work>
- *World Health Organisation*:
  - Covid-19:  
[https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab_1)
  - Health Alert on WhatsApp (Arabic):  
[wa.me/41225017023?text=](https://wa.me/41225017023?text=)
  - Looking after our mental health:  
<https://www.who.int/campaigns/connecting-the-world-to-combat-coronavirus/healthyathome/healthyathome---mental-health>
  - Protect yourself and others:  
<http://www.emro.who.int/health-topics/corona-virus/protect-yourself-and-others.html>

## Security

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<https://www.aam-us.org/programs/ethics-standards-and-professional-practices/disaster-preparedness-and-emergency-response-plan/>
- *Arts Council England*. Security in museums and galleries: the museum security toolkit:  
[https://326gtd123dbk1xdkdm489u1q-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/TheMuseumSecurityToolkit\\_02.pdf](https://326gtd123dbk1xdkdm489u1q-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/TheMuseumSecurityToolkit_02.pdf)
- *Claire Fry ACR and Spencer & Fry*. Collection Care Guidance for Museums and Historic Properties during the Covid-19 Crisis:  
[https://icon.org.uk/system/files/public/collection\\_care\\_guide\\_for\\_museums\\_and\\_historic\\_houses\\_during\\_covid-19\\_updated.pdf](https://icon.org.uk/system/files/public/collection_care_guide_for_museums_and_historic_houses_during_covid-19_updated.pdf)
- *Collections Trust*:
  - The Security Audit:  
<https://collectionstrust.org.uk/resource/the-security-audit/>
  - Emergency planning e-learning tool:  
<https://collectionstrust.org.uk/resource/emergency-planning-e-learning-tool/>
- *Museum Security Network*. The Museum Security Network distributes content related to the protection, preservation, and conservation of cultural heritage. Founded in 12/96 by Ton Cremers:  
[https://groups.google.com/g/museum\\_security\\_network](https://groups.google.com/g/museum_security_network)
- *Museum Galleries Scotland*. Security Checklist – short version for COVID-19 lockdown:  
[https://www.museumsgalleriescotland.org.uk/media/1932/mgs-museum-security-checklist-for-lockdown.pdf?utm\\_content=buffer80f80&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=twitter.com&utm\\_campaign=buffer](https://www.museumsgalleriescotland.org.uk/media/1932/mgs-museum-security-checklist-for-lockdown.pdf?utm_content=buffer80f80&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer)

- *National Park Service (NPS)*. Museum Handbook, Part I, Chapter 10: Emergency Planning (2019):  
<https://www.nps.gov/museum/publications/MHI/Chap10.pdf>
- *The American Institute for Conservation and the Foundation for Advancement in Conservation*. Disaster Response & Recovery Guides:  
<https://www.culturalheritage.org/resources/emergencies/disaster-response-recovery>

### Digital Security

- *Build Digital Capacity*. Twitter #BuildDigitalCapacity:  
<https://twitter.com/hashtag/BuildDigitalCapacity>
- *Center for Internet Security (CIS)*:  
<https://www.cisecurity.org/controls/cis-controls-list/>
- *Doist*. The Rise of Remote Workers: A Checklist for Securing Your Network (Blog):  
<https://doist.com/blog/security-checklist-remote-workers/>
- *Europeana Pro*. Strategy 2020-2025. Empowering digital change:  
<https://pro.europeana.eu/page/strategy-2020-2025-summary#introduction>
  - To follow the news on the project: <https://pro.europeana.eu/page/news>
  - To receive direct updates: [sign up to the Europeana Network Association](#).
- *VisionRI Connexion Services*. Cybersecurity post - COVID 19 - More internet means more threats:  
<https://www.devdiscourse.com/article/technology/988466-cybersecurity-post-covid-19-more-internet-means-more-threats-stay-alert-folks>

### Securing the premises

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- *Claire Fry ACR and Spencer & Fry*. Collection Care Guidance for Museums and Historic Properties during the Covid-19 Crisis:  
[https://icon.org.uk/system/files/public/collection\\_care\\_guide\\_for\\_museums\\_and\\_historic\\_houses\\_during\\_covid-19\\_updated.pdf](https://icon.org.uk/system/files/public/collection_care_guide_for_museums_and_historic_houses_during_covid-19_updated.pdf)
- *Museum Development East Midlands*. Museum Site Visit Template Checklist:
  - Guidance note: <https://mdem.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Museum-Site-Visit-Template-Checklist-MDEM.docx>
  - Video training session: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V69KXz7Zwx8>
- *National Museums Scotland*. Museum Social Stand Up (video):  
<https://vimeo.com/415619097>
- *Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service et al*. Assess and manage risk in collections care:  
<https://collectionstrust.org.uk/resource/assess-and-manage-risk-in-collections-care/>
- *Observatory Illicit Traffic*. Security in museums and galleries: the Security Audit:  
[https://www.obs-traffic.museum/sites/default/files/ressources/files/ACE\\_CT\\_Security\\_Audit.pdf](https://www.obs-traffic.museum/sites/default/files/ressources/files/ACE_CT_Security_Audit.pdf)

### Preservation

- *American Alliance of Museums*. Managing collections care during pandemics:  
<https://www.aam-us.org/programs/about-museums/reviewing-cleaning-and-collections-care-policies/>

- *Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material (AICCM)*:
  - Closed by COVID-19? A Practice Guide for managers of heritage collections that are closed at short notice because of an epidemic or pandemic: <https://aiccm.org.au/disaster/disaster-response/>
  - Collection care: <https://aiccm.org.au/conservation/collection-care/>
- *Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI)*:
  - Caring for Heritage Collections during the COVID-19 Pandemic (version 2): <https://www.canada.ca/en/conservation-institute/services/conservation-preservation-publications/canadian-conservation-institute-notes/caring-heritage-collections-covid19.html>  
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- *Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artefacts*. COVID-19 Resources for Cultural Institutions: Collection Care, Disaster response: <https://ccha.org/covid-19-resources-cultural-institutions>
- *CoOL. Conservation OnLine*. Resources for Conservation Professionals: <https://cool.culturalheritage.org/>
- *Conservation Wiki*. Ten Agents of Deterioration: [https://www.conservation-wiki.com/wiki/Ten\\_Agents\\_of\\_Deterioration](https://www.conservation-wiki.com/wiki/Ten_Agents_of_Deterioration)
- *Foundation for Advancement in Conservation*:
  - Connecting to Collections Care: <https://www.connectingtocollections.org/>
  - Facebook Book Live Event: Collections Care and COVID-19: <https://www.connectingtocollections.org/collections-care-covid-19/>
  - COVID-19 Resource List: <http://www.connectingtocollections.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/C2CCareApril2020COVIDResourceList.pdf>
- *Institute of Conservation (ICON)*. Conservation and care of collections during the Coronavirus pandemic: <https://icon.org.uk/news/conservation-and-care-of-collections-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic>
- *Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)*:
  - Coronavirus (COVID-19) Updates: <https://www.imls.gov/coronavirus-covid-19-updates>
  - Presentation: Mitigating COVID-19 When Managing Paper-Based, Circulating, and Other Types of Collections: <https://www.imls.gov/webinars/mitigating-covid-19-when-managing-paper-based-circulating-and-other-types-collections>
- *Museum Galleries Scotland*. Caring for collections during COVID-19: <https://www.museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk/advice/coronavirus-guidance-for-museums/caring-for-collections-during-covid-19>
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  - Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/disinfecting-building-facility.html>
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<sup>1</sup> [Press Release] (18 May 2020). COVID-19: UNESCO and ICOM concerned about the situation faced by the world's museums. *UNESCO*. <https://en.unesco.org/news/covid-19-unesco-and-icom-concerned-about-situation-faced-worlds-museums>. To read the full reports *ICOM* "Museums, museum professionals and COVID-19" and *UNESCO* "Museums around the world in the face of COVID-19" see **Resources** Lockdown.

<sup>2</sup> See note 1

<sup>3</sup> See note 1

<sup>4</sup> For other materials see Nazario, Brunilda (August 21, 2020). How Long Does the Coronavirus Live on Surfaces? *WebMD Medical Reference*. <https://www.webmd.com/lung/how-long-covid-19-lives-on-surfaces>. Notice that this articles partly outdated the recommendations by the *National Center for Preservation Technology and Training (NCPTT)*: Covid-19 Basics: Disinfecting Cultural Resources listed in **Resources**-Preservation –*Sanitation*.

<sup>5</sup> See note 4



## **PART 2**

### **COUNTRY OVERVIEWS**

# Heritage Guidelines for COVID-19

## IRAQ – COUNTRY OVERVIEW

### *Introduction*

This chapter sets out the situation of heritage and heritage management in Iraq 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.

Months before the pandemic reached Iraq, the country was facing numerous problems. An ever-weakening economy, failed stabilization efforts, and non-inclusive politics created widespread discontent amongst the population. For the last ten months, a persistent mass protest movement has been demanding political and economic change. More recently, poor healthcare has been added to their core grievances. A new government was chosen after almost half a year of political wrangling and it will need to face the challenge of steering Iraq out of the existing political and economic crises. The pandemic has heavily impacted both the private and the public sectors, which have suffered enormous losses. It is estimated that, on average, sales have declined by at least 50 per cent and that the economy will contract by 9.7 per cent this year (2020). Furthermore, the sudden drop of oil prices has crippled Iraq's profits while the country has no other economic products it can export. In fact, over 93% of the salaries in the public sector are paid from oil revenues. At current levels, Iraq will be unable to maintain payroll for the public sector – Iraq's largest employer – and it will similarly be unable to pay pensions. Unemployment is soaring, salaries are cut, inflation is rising, and many people are being reduced to poverty. Already, more than 10% of the population is in need of humanitarian assistance. In short, Iraq has fewer resources to deal with pre-existing issues, and now COVID-19 has been added to the Iraqi's concerns. Complicating the crisis are the tensions at the Iraq-Iran border between the US and Iran which have intensified since the United States attacked Iranian backed leaders in Bagdad. The Islamic State is also making a gradual comeback since its defeat in 2017. They are mainly focused in sparsely populated rural areas that spare them from the effects of coronavirus infection. They are exploiting a lull in security caused by the virus and are taking advantage of the on-going sectarian politics.

### *Health*

#### Basic data

First COVID-19 case Iraq: February 22, 2020 - student from Najaf, returning from Iran.

First case Kurdistan Region of Iraq: March 1, 2020.

Most affected regions: southern and northern peripheries, and urban areas

Cases as of August 17, 2020<sup>1</sup>

- Confirmed cases 176,931
- Fatalities 5,860
- Recovered 125,374

Numbers of confirmed cases, fatalities and recovered patients since the outbreak of COVID-19 are continuing to increase and the danger of a second wave of infections remains and

the danger of a second wave of infections remains (see for more updates at ***Resources*** [Daily updates](#)).

### Underreporting

In Iraq, as elsewhere, underreporting of COVID-19 cases is inevitable due to limited testing facilities. However, the reasons for this discrepancy remain controversial. It is presumed that the government purposefully conceals the true number to avoid mass panic. The World Health Organization (WHO) denies that this is the case but some doctors and officials have confirmed this reason for underreporting. Another theory, that some cases are hidden for various socio-economic and religious reasons, is considered to be true according to other sources.

### Misinformation

Technology is playing a key role in bringing people together as we maintain social distancing, but, unfortunately, it's also being used to spread misinformation and fake news, fuelling anxiety and stigma at the same time. UNICEF has partnered with telecommunication companies like Korek Telecom, Zain, and Asia Cell to combat misinformation and is communicating on multiple channels and in multiple languages. Since May they have reached approximately 14 million people in Iraq with critical information related to COVID-19 through U-report chatbot, SMS, and Viber. The National UNESCO Office to Iraq held a training course on "Safety of Journalists and fighting disinformation amid COVID-19" from 29-30 May. The participants formed a group that will work on tracking misinformation that addresses everything surrounding COVID-19 and the procedures that accompany the pandemic. (For more see the *World Health Organisation* —About COVID-19, —COVID-19 - Questions and answers, —Myth busters and *World Health Organisation*, Office of Eastern Mediterranean Region below at ***Resources: Other Resources***.)

### Health infrastructure

Even before the pandemic, Iraq's healthcare system was in a chronic state of decay, suffering from sanctions, occupation, civil war, underinvestment, corruption, and neglect. The post-2003 government has failed to either rebuild a robust centralized healthcare system or to pave the way for a federalized model. Life expectancy and child mortality rates are far poorer than average for the region and the country has some of the lowest numbers of doctors and nurses per capita in the region. The Republic of Iraq includes the partially autonomous Kurdistan Region with their own parliament and cabinet. Hence, the COVID-19 regulations ordered by the Government in Iraq might differ from those in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. The latter has a better healthcare as it was far less affected by the US invasion in 2003 and the resulting civil war. Since the outbreak of Covid-19 the health sector has been stretched even more. Iraq's health care infrastructure is unable to treat the large number of patients who are expected to have contracted the Covid-19 virus. Coordination across provinces and hospitals has neither reflected strong management from Baghdad nor robust ownership at the governorate level. In some regions, public healthcare clinics as well as private clinics and hospitals are reportedly being closed. There are also reports that patients are turned away from the clinics.<sup>2</sup> Advanced testing capacity is currently limited to the five provinces with WHO-approved centres. See for more information on COVID-19 in Iraq ***Resources*** [Other COVID-19 Resources on Iraq](#).

### State regulations

Regulations and actions in response to the COVID-19 outbreak taken by the Government of Iraq can differ from those taken by the Kurdistan Regional Parliament of Iraq.

For different reasons, not all people are following the measures ordered by either government. In some areas, the will to follow measures is very low, which demonstrably helps to spread the virus. The imposed measures from both authorities can vary according to the gravity of the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. For that reason it is very important to keep oneself abreast of the changes.

### *Government of Iraq*

The Government of Iraq is working closely with the World Health Organization. Within Iraq, there are similarities and differences between governorates. In March, the government formed a “Special Committee” to contain the proliferation of COVID-19 and to issue the necessary related recommendations and decisions. The interdepartmental committee included representatives of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

By the end of March, the government had also created the “Higher Committee for Health and National Safety”, which limited the Special Committee’s prerogatives and reduced it to an advisory committee. The Higher Committee is an extended interdepartmental committee, has more executive power, and is chaired by the Prime Minister. Next to these committees there is a parliamentary COVID-19 crisis cell. The measures taken by the Higher Committee can change week-by-week, and depend on the changing COVID-19 situation. In general, the government regulations boil down to: social distancing; lockdown (exempting some essential services and key ministries); closing of mosques; wearing face masks in public spaces; (partial) curfew; closure of borders (including airports); restricting traffic movement to certain key transportation vehicles; a travel ban; and no funerals and religious gatherings or festivals. The regulations are enforced by security forces and not following the regulations results in fines being imposed. Depending on the COVID-19 situation, the authorities can lift any of these regulations, which can vary by region.

Updates to the government regulations can be checked at Government of Iraq – COVID-19 website (see below at **Resources: Government of Iraq - Coronavirus information**) and at the Facebook page of the Iraq Ministry of Health (see below at **Resources: Government of Iraq – Iraq Ministry of Health**).

### *Kurdistan Region of Iraq*

For specific regulations in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, see the COVID-19 website of the Kurdistan Regional Government (see below at **Resources: Kurdistan Regional Government —COVID-19 Information and —COVID-19 situation update**). The Ministry of Health also has an Emergency Hotline Number - if you have symptoms of Coronavirus call 122. The line operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

## **Society**

The consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak have significantly impacted various social, psychological and cultural aspects of Iraqi society.

### Mental health

Soon after the first COVID-19 cases were confirmed, the most urgent needs (at that moment) were medical. However, as the lockdown lasted longer, stress levels rose. As elsewhere, tensions rose inside crowded homes. The violent conflict and the political instability had already claimed much of people’s resilience. Daily routines were broken, shopping was difficult, children had to stay inside in cramped rooms,

and jobless people were forced to stay at home, leaving families without income. Regular health services, including mental health care, have stopped and people are not being treated. Mental disorders from before COVID-19 are now getting worse. Only one NGO is working with mobile teams combining simple medical care with mental health care. Though their teams cover the most affected areas they also have teams in the rest of the country. Clearly, the badly needed psychosocial support is seriously lagging behind. For more, see below at **Resources: Other Resources**, *World Health Organisation* - Looking after our mental health and at **Other resources for Iraq** *World Health Organisation* - Mental health and psychosocial support (including addresses in Iraq for support).

### Domestic violence

Iraq remains one of the most difficult places in the world to be a woman, with a fifth of women being at risk of physical violence in 2006, and 36 per cent of women suffering psychological abuse (as of 2012). These figures may also be deflated as abused women have nowhere to go, and so crimes against them go largely unreported. Furthermore, recent UN records have shown that there were more than 123 suicide attempts due to gender-based violence in April-May, 2020 only. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of calls to Gender-based Violence (GBV) and domestic violence NGO hotlines has significantly increased after confinement measures were imposed. The death on April 18 of a 20-year-old woman in Najaf, possibly at the hands of her husband, has led to national outcries. However, the Iraq Parliament has still not passed the Anti-Domestic Violence Law, which was drafted in 2015. Key amendments should be completed quickly; this bill needs to be approved urgently. Another draft law from 2014, the Jaafari Personal Status Law, which would restrict women's rights in matters of inheritance, and parental and other rights after divorce, making it easier for men to take multiple wives, and allowing girls to be married from age 9, was withdrawn 2 years later. Since 2011, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq has had a law (Act No.8) on domestic violence. For more information and assistance see below at **Resources Other resources for Iraq** *Cordaid* - Country Office Erbil, Health Program Manager and *Iraq Middle East Domestic Violence Agencies*. Also at **Resources Other Resources** *Abaad* - Playing for Gender Equality Program and Gender based violence case management online course; *UNFPA* - Survivors of sexual violence need healing and justice even amid pandemic, leaders assert and Former child bride, once sold to pay debts, finds a new start; *UN Woman* - 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; *United Nations* - Policy Brief. The impact of COVID-19 on women; *WHO* - Displaced or refugee women are at increased risk of violence. What can WHO do? and Strengthening the health system response to violence against women (video).

### Stigma

Ignoring the potential political reasons for underreporting the basic data on COVID-19, the figures are also biased by issues relating to religion and culture. In the entire region, countries are struggling with the stigma surrounding the virus and disruptions of social and religious practices. A medical anthropologist from Iraq has stated that “It is not easy to tell people that the coronavirus is stronger than God.”<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, these stigmas are another cause of the rapid spread of the coronavirus. Also 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).

### *Religion*

Key religious authorities such as Grand Ayatollah Sistani have called for compliance with the curfew and have mobilized charitable institutions. However, conservative, and largely Shia, Iraqis have flouted government curfews imposed to stem the coronavirus pandemic.

The populist Shia leader Muqtada al-Sadr and other conservative clerics have refused to warn their followers of the need to socially isolate themselves, and instead allow large gatherings at religious shrines. He added that he hoped everyone would complete their visits quickly while following medical guidance so they would not be a source of infection to others. Yet, cases of coronavirus spreading in shrine cities as a direct result of this practice are known. When, on March 20, hundreds of thousands of pilgrims - many probably from Iran - defied the government's orders by converging on a Shiite shrine in Baghdad, the Iraqi government was forced to deploy troops. After the event, many new cases were found in eastern Baghdad. A similar case occurred in Erbil, where a significant rise of infections was determined after a banned funeral gathering took place regardless. Some of the fear surrounding the disease stems from the Muslim rituals surrounding death. The Islamic tradition requires swift burial, and the longer the delay, the more people fear for the soul of the deceased. Adding to the problems is the tradition of washing the bodies of people who have just died, which the authorities fear could also spread the virus. Some Muslims believe that the virus means that God is displeased with them, or maybe it is a punishment for a sin, so they don't want others to see that they are sick. Muqtada al-Sadr blamed the coronavirus pandemic on homosexuality and that the virus was a "message from Heaven".<sup>4</sup>

### *Culture*

Local conservative clerics and traditional families have resisted the attempts of female relatives to get tested for coronavirus, fearing that, in the case of a positive test, they would need to be quarantined or treated in the hospital and that would bring "dishonour" and "shame" on the families.<sup>5</sup> The aversion to quarantine and the reluctance to admit illness may also help to explain why the number of confirmed cases in Iraq is relatively low, and why some people delay seeking medical help until they are catastrophically ill.

Illness is stigmatized in Iraq. Families have intervened and removed female patients from medical care facilities, considering the quarantine to be "dishonourable" as the woman would have had to live outside the family home without a male chaperone and guardian present. Some families have even organised demonstrations outside hospitals that quarantine coronavirus patients. Quarantining those who are infected imposes a double humiliation in many Iraqi communities. First, it ensures that everyone in the neighbourhood will learn about the illness. Second, if the victim is a man, it signifies that he is no longer able to protect his wife and his children and, so, has fallen short of fulfilling his role in the family. One doctor explained that —The worst thing in the world isn't to die, but it's to die away from your family and your community and to have no control over what happens to your body.<sup>6</sup> Public health officers consider the stigma associated with illness and quarantine as one of the biggest obstacles in fighting COVID-19. In an effort to overcome the stigma and put together an accurate picture of the scope of the epidemic, the Iraqi Health Ministry has resorted to random testing. But this program has brought a new set of troubles. Iraqi social media users have condemned the trend, with some using an Arabic-language hash tag that translates to "epidemic of ignorance".

## ***Humanitarian aid***

Since the invasion of the Coalition in 2003, Iraq has become ever more dependent on international aid. In the COVID-19 era, this dependency has grown, particularly following the crisis in the oil market, which pays for most government salaries. In the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) *Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19* (see **Resources**, [Other resources](#)) the humanitarian needs for Iraq more than doubled. Thus UN humanitarian agencies have scaled up their support, mainly working with and through the government. Both the humanitarian programs and the field missions experience great difficulty in planning, monitoring and implementing critical humanitarian activities. The lockdown and travel bans interfered directly with the programs, but also indirectly, for example by limiting legal assistance (restricting access to proper documents) or causing liquidity problems (limiting access to cash to pay staff and procure needed supplies). These are almost insoluble challenges humanitarian actors to face. Most of the funds go to providing medical supplies and equipment, and facilitating their local production.

Many humanitarian organisations give special attention to the needs of the most vulnerable people. People on the move (internally displaced people, refugees, and migrants) and living in crowded conditions are particularly exposed, but children, people with disabilities and women are also very vulnerable. Non-governmental organisations are concentrating their assistance in the most affected areas. With the help of local providers, awareness raising campaigns are being set up. Food and cash distributions are being organised and even some small-scale income-generating projects have started. Hotlines have been opened to give direct psychosocial support and to help with stress management. For more information see **Resources**: [Other Resources for Iraq – Arab.org](#). NGO Directory of Iraq; *Cordaid*; *Humanitarian Response*: Iraq; *ICRC*: Iraq; *ICR*: Iraq; *Iraqi Civil Society Solidarity Initiative (ICSSI)*; *NEFI*: Iraq; *Reliefweb*: Iraq; *Ummah Welfare Trust*: Iraq; *UNDP*: Iraq; *UNOCHA*: Iraq and at [Other Resources](#) see *Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND)* and *UNOCHA - Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19*.

## ***Heritage***

The invasion of Iraq by the Coalition in 2003 had many adverse effects on Iraq's cultural heritage. Following the initial devastation of the country's heritage during and in the years immediately following the occupation, the continuous violence, especially by ISIS, continued to cause damage. The sectarian politics since 2003 have eroded government heritage institutions that must constantly compete with the privileged religious endowments.<sup>7</sup> Today, as the confirmed cases and fatalities as a result of COVID-19 continue to rise, pulling resources from other sectors, the heritage sector is struggling for survival.

Many cities have been left in ruins since they were recaptured from ISIS and now there is even less chance that they will be rebuilt. Reconstruction projects have paused which may lead to partial or total loss of any heritage remaining in those cities. At the Mosul Museum, for example, reconstruction was just getting started. With the discontinuation of some of these projects and others moved to remote support for a certain time, the cultural and social healing that is essential in the post-ISIS era is at risk. Museums, libraries, and other cultural venues were forced to close, leaving those whose livelihoods depend on these jobs in a precarious position. Regular heritage maintenance activities are also prevented, such as building and collections maintenance, preservation and conservation, climate control, pest management, security, courses and

training, leaving institutions in danger from neglect. As is common in a crisis, historic buildings are almost unnoticeably destroyed; city landmarks are turned into places for personal use; and construction or agricultural activities encroach more quickly onto archaeological sites.

State employees suffer from salary cuts while their official duties are totally or partly suspended. Others, like guards at archaeological sites, have lost their jobs, yet looting during the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly increased.<sup>8</sup> Pressed by circumstances, heritage workers are forced to look for other jobs. There is a danger that they will not return to their former positions and, consequently, the sector will lose their experience and expertise. Cultural heritage sites are a key part of the government's tourism policy, and of some NGO sustainable development programmes. With the closure of this sector, many key workers have lost their jobs in the associated cultural events industry and the handicraft industries. Additionally, the lockdown indirectly threatens Iraq's intangible heritage as traditional, religious and family gatherings are forbidden. These include Friday prayers at the mosque, pilgrimages, funerals, weddings, and breaking of the fast and Eid al Fitr during Ramadan. Over the longer term, this might cause harm to cultural identities.

For more see **Resources** Other resources for Iraq *American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR); National Organization For Architectural Heritage; Save the Tigris; The Academic Research Institute in Iraq (TARII); The British Institute for the Study of Iraq; The Iraqi Institute for the Conservation of Antiquities and Heritage (IICAH); The Nahrein Network; UNESCO National Office to Iraq; Università di Bologna. ALMA MATER STUDIORUM.* At **Resources** Other resources see *Arab League's Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO); Arab Network for Safeguarding Cultural Heritage (ANSCH); Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO); Rashid International 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 and much humanitarian aid today is redirected towards fighting COVID-19 and assistance to the most vulnerable. Many aid budgets have been reduced, including in the heritage sector. While several countries created emergency funds for their own heritage sector, recognising the devastating impact of COVID-19, today very few international organisations 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 have 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 Patrimonies*: The Patrimonies 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/patrimonies>
- *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/>
- *Goethe Institut Iraq: Spotlight Iraq 2020* is a support program for cultural creators living in Iraq. It financially supports art and culture projects.\_  
<https://www.goethe.de/ins/iq/en/kul/sup/sir.html>  
Facebook Group <https://www.facebook.com/goetheinstitut.iraq>
- *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>
- *Un Ponte Per*: The conservation of Iraq's cultural and environmental heritage has been an integral part of Un Ponte Per's work in support of the Iraqi population for many years. <https://www.unponteper.it/en/tutela-del-patrimonio-culturale/>
- *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](http://www.unesco.org/culture/en/hef/pdf/Iraq_2016-2018.pdf)
- *World Heritage Fund*: The World Heritage Fund provides about \$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. 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 Iraq, see below at **Resources: Other resources for Iraq**. 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.

It is important is 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 at humanitarian organisations (see below at **Resources**: Other resources for Iraq).

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.museumandheritage.com/features/income-generation-how-to-increase-revenue-in-museums/>

### Expertise

Some staff or organisations feel they need expert advice. In that case, see under the specific heritage sector chapters elsewhere in the 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. Cultural institutions where staff have been reduced, can still work on alternative tasks. This might be an opportunity to take care of overdue maintenance, provide extra training for staff, and take on non-job related but essential tasks like security improvement, or climate or pest control management. Switching tasks gives staff a chance to learn more about the wider work processes of the organisation which, ultimately, is very advantageous for the organisation.

If a cultural institution is closed there is still a chance to make new plans, design new strategies, and update collection catalogues, executed and coordinated by digital tools. And do not forget to start a heritage awareness raising campaign, as many might not know what you are doing, how important your work is, and what the role of cultural heritage in society in general is. (See for more 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 worthwhile 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 details, see Part III of the Guidelines - *Basic Digital Tools*.) Find some examples below:

- *ANSCH*. Facebook Group: [https://www.facebook.com/ANSCH-110334927271070/?ref=search&\\_tn\\_=%2Cd%2CP-R&eid=ARDdn0BQiiUUMWW53VQBUZuL6tGY9alFi-zB9R8wtOiKMt-4cOqFBcjtF5WzwZWeMX\\_jOB1xYQZfpf9](https://www.facebook.com/ANSCH-110334927271070/?ref=search&_tn_=%2Cd%2CP-R&eid=ARDdn0BQiiUUMWW53VQBUZuL6tGY9alFi-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/>
- *Erbil Hub* (apply to join): <https://www.globalshapers.org/hubs/erbil-hub>
- *Heritage for All*. Facebook Group: [https://www.facebook.com/groups/214091372432295/?ref=br\\_rs](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. Iraq:*  
<https://www.coronatracker.com/country/iraq/>
- *Government of Iraq. Coronavirus daily updates:*  
<https://coronavirus.iq>
- *Worldometers. Iraq:*  
<https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/iraq/>
- *World Health Organisation. Office of Eastern Mediterranean Region:*  
<https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiN2ExNWl3ZGQtZDk3My00YzE2LWFjYmQtNGMwZjk0OWQ1MjFhIiwidCI6ImY2MTBjMGI3LWJkMjQtNGIzOS04MTBiLTNkYzI4MGFmYjU5MCI6ImMiOjh9>

### Government of Iraq

- *Government of Iraq*
  - Coronavirus information: <https://gds.gov.iq/covid-19/>
  - Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/GovernmentofIraq/>
  - Twitter Group:  
[https://twitter.com/IraqiGovt/status/1268106555121156096?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Eembeddedtimeline%7Ctwterm%5Eprofile%3AIraqiGovt%7Ctwcon%5Etimelinedata%7Ctwurl=https%3A%2F%2Fgds.gov.iq%2Fcabinet-approves-measure-to-allow-final-year-primary-school-students-to-graduate-based-on-half-term-exam-results%2F](https://twitter.com/IraqiGovt/status/1268106555121156096?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Eembeddedtimeline%7Ctwterm%5Eprofile%3AIraqiGovt%7Ctwcon%5Etimelinedata%7Ctwurl=https%3A%2F%2Fgds.gov.iq%2Fcabinet-approves-measure-to-allow-final-year-primary-school-students-to-graduate-based-on-half-term-exam-results%2F)
- *Iraq Ministry of Health*
  - Website: <https://moh.gov.iq>
  - Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/MOH.GOV.IQ/>
  - Media and Communications Commission, Ministry of Health, World Health Organization - Corona virus Iraq: <https://coronavirus.iq/>

### Kurdistan Regional Government

- *Kurdistan Regional Government*
  - COVID-19 Information: <https://gov.krd/coronavirus-en/>
  - COVID-19 situation update: <https://gov.krd/coronavirus-en/situation-update/>
  - Emergency call 122 - lines are open 24/7
  - Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/Kurdistan/>
  - General Board of Tourism <http://bot.gov.krd/tourism-board/official-site-general-board-tourism-kurdistan-iraq>
  - Twitter Group: <https://twitter.com/Kurdistan>
  - Instagram Group: <https://www.instagram.com/kurdistan/>

### Other COVID-19 Resources on Iraq

- *International Committee of the Red Cross. COVID-19: ICRC response in Iraq:*  
<https://www.icrc.org/en/document/covid-19-icrc-response-iraq>

- *International Organization for Migration (IOM)* - Displacement Tracking Device – Dashboard COVID-19 (Iraq): <http://iraqdtm.iom.int/COVID19>
- *United Nation Population Fund (UNPFA)*.
  - COVID-19 Situation Report No. 5 for UNPFA, Arab States (30 June 2020): <https://www.unpfa.org/resources/covid-19-situation-report-no-5-unpfa-arab-states>
  - COVID-19 Population Vulnerability Dashboard, Iraq: <https://covid19-map.unpfa.org/>
- *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA)*. Humanitarian Response - COVID-19-IRAQ Weekly Situation reports: <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/iraq/covid-19>
- *Wikipedia*. COVID-19 pandemic in Iraq. Statistics updated daily: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19\\_pandemic\\_in\\_Iraq](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19_pandemic_in_Iraq)
- *World Health Organisation*
  - Dynamic Dashboard for Iraq: <http://ow.ly/6Ghn50z9UTh>
  - Country Office Iraq News: <http://www.emro.who.int/irq/iraq-news/>
  - Country Office Iraq Twitter Group: <https://twitter.com/WHOIraq>
- *World Health Organisation*. Office of Eastern Mediterranean Region: <http://www.emro.who.int/index.html>

#### Other resources for Iraq

- *American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR)*
  - Homepage: <http://www.asor.org/about-asor/>
  - Cultural Heritage Initiatives (CHI) (report): <https://www.asor.org/chi/reports/special-reports/Palmyra-Heritage-Adrift>
- *Arab.org*. NGO Directory of Iraq <https://arab.org/countries/iraq/>
- *Cordaid*. Country Office Erbil: <https://www.cordaid.org/en/countries/iraq/>
- *Humanitarian Response*. Iraq: <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/iraq>
- *International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC)*. Iraq: <https://www.icrc.org/en/where-we-work/middle-east/iraq>
- *International Rescue Committee (ICR)*. Iraq: <https://www.rescue.org/country/iraq>
- *Iraqi Civil Society Solidarity Initiative (ICSSI)* Homepage <https://www.iraqicivilsociety.org/>
- *Iraq Middle East Domestic Violence Agencies*: <https://www.hotpeachpages.net/mideast/index.html#Iraq>
- *National Organization For Architectural Heritage* Facebook Group <https://www.facebook.com/National-Organization-For-Architectural-Heritage-1924423381116321/>
- *Near East Foundation (NEF)*. Iraq <https://www.near-east.org/where-we-work/iraq/>
- *Reliefweb*. Iraq: <https://reliefweb.int/country/irq>
- *Save the Tigris* <https://www.savethetigris.org/about/>
- *The Academic Research Institute in Iraq (TARII)* <https://www.tarii.org/>

- *The British Institute for the Study of Iraq*  
<http://www.bisi.ac.uk/>
- *The Iraqi Institute for the Conservation of Antiquities and Heritage (IICAH)*
  - Homepage <https://www.artcons.udel.edu/outreach/global-engagement/iraqi-institute>
  - Facebook Group <https://www.facebook.com/Iraqiinst>
- *The Nahrein Network*
  - Homepage: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/nahrein/>
  - Twitter Group: [https://twitter.com/NahreinNetwork?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Eembeddedtimeline%7Ctwterm%5Eprofile%3ANahreinNetwork&ref\\_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ucl.ac.uk%2Fnahrein%2F](https://twitter.com/NahreinNetwork?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Eembeddedtimeline%7Ctwterm%5Eprofile%3ANahreinNetwork&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ucl.ac.uk%2Fnahrein%2F)
- *Ummah Welfare Trust. Iraq:* <https://uwt.org/emergency-appeals/iraq-appeal/>
- *UN Agencies in Iraq.* (occasional) COVID-19 news - link to agencies:  
[https://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=1543&Itemid=655&lang=en](https://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=1543&Itemid=655&lang=en)
- *UN Woman*
  - **Helpline Iraq: 110**
- *UNESCO National Office to Iraq.* (occasional) COVID-19 news:  
<https://en.unesco.org/fieldoffice/baghdad>
- *United Nations Development Fund (UNDP).* Iraq:  
<https://www.iq.undp.org/content/iraq/en/home.html>
- *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).* Iraq situation:  
<https://reporting.unhcr.org/iraqsituation>
- *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA).* Iraq:  
<https://fts.unocha.org/countries/106/summary/2020>
- *Università di Bologna. ALMA MATER STUDIUM – Education and Cultural Heritage Enhancement for Social Cohesion in Iraq:*  
<https://site.unibo.it/eduu/en>
- *World Health Organization.* Mental health and psychosocial support (including addresses in Iraq for support):  
<http://www.emro.who.int/mhps/index.html>

#### 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>
- *Aga Khan University - CoronaCheck.* (via Google Play):  
<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.edu.aku.akuhccheck>
- *Arab Network for Safeguarding Cultural Heritage (ANSCH)- COVID-19:*  
<https://ansch.heritageforpeace.org/guidelines/>

- *Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND)*  
<http://www.annd.org/english/page.php?pageId=1>
- *Arab League's Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO)*  
<https://www.alecso.org/nsite/ar/>
- *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>
- *Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO)*  
<https://www.icesco.org/?lang=en>
- *Rashid International*  
<https://rashid-international.org/>
- *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/syrian-arab-republic?pageNumber=2>
  - *The Shadow Pandemic: Domestic violence in the wake of COVID-19* (Video)  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llNP\\_bW-o0](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>
- *UNESCO. Culture and COVID-19:*  
<https://en.unesco.org/news/culture-covid-19-impact-and-response-tracker>
- *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA). Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19:*  
<https://fts.unocha.org/appeals/952/summary>
- *United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).*
  - Survivors of sexual violence need healing and justice even amid pandemic, leaders assert:  
<https://www.unfpa.org/news/survivors-sexual-violence-need-healing-and-justice-even-amid-pandemic-leaders-assert>
  - Former child bride, once sold to pay debts, finds a new start  
<https://www.unfpa.org/news/former-child-bride-once-sold-pay-debts-finds-new-start>
- *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=](https://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-others.html>
- Strengthening the health system response to violence against women (video): [https://youtu.be/Qc\\_GHITvTmI](https://youtu.be/Qc_GHITvTmI)
- What can you do to fight stigma associated with COVID-19? (Video) <https://youtu.be/vinh0IIG1p0>

<sup>1</sup> World Health Organisation, Office of Eastern Mediterranean Region (August 23, 2020). Retrieved from <https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiN2ExNWl3ZGQtdk3My00YzE2LWFjYmQtNGMwZjk0OWQ1MjFhIiwidCI6ImY2MTBjMGI3LWJkMjQtNGIzOS04MTBiLTNkYzI4MGFmYjU5MCIslmMiOjh9>

<sup>2</sup> Allinson, Tom (April 3, 2020). Coronavirus in Iraq: Bullets, repression, Iran trump COVID-19. *Deutsche Welle*. <https://www.dw.com/en/coronavirus-in-iraq-bullets-repression-iran-trump-covid-19/a-52624119>

<sup>3</sup> Rubin, Alissa J. (April 15, 2020). Stigma Hampers Iraqi Efforts to Fight the Coronavirus. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/14/world/middleeast/iraq-coronavirus-stigma-quarantine.html>

<sup>4</sup> [News desk] (March 28, 2020). Prominent Iraqi cleric Moqtada al-Sadr blames coronavirus pandemic on gay marriage. *The New Arab*. <https://english.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2020/3/28/prominent-iraqi-cleric-blames-coronavirus-pandemic-on-gay-marriage>

<sup>5</sup> [News desk] (March 29, 2020). The Iraq Report: Political paralysis slows fight against coronavirus amid economic woes. *The New Arab*. <https://english.alaraby.co.uk/english/indepth/2020/3/31/the-iraq-report-coronavirus-fight-slowed-by-government-paralysis>

<sup>6</sup> Rubin, Alissa J. (April 14, 2020). Stigma Hampers Iraqi Efforts to Fight the Coronavirus. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/14/world/middleeast/iraq-coronavirus-stigma-quarantine.html>

<sup>7</sup> See Tejjgeler, Rene and Mehiyar Kathem (forthcoming 2021). Political ruptures and the cultural heritage of Iraq. *Handbook of Sustainable Heritage* (Routledge).

<sup>8</sup> Matthews, Roger (June 18, 2020). Looting of antiquities has increased under lockdown – here's how we're working to prevent this in Iraq. *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/looting-of-antiquities-has-increased-under-lockdown-heres-how-were-working-to-prevent-this-in-iraq-139528>



# Heritage Guidelines for COVID-19

## LIBYA – COUNTRY OVERVIEW

### *Introduction*

This chapter sets out the situation of heritage and heritage management in Libya 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.

Libya is facing several challenges, including building a functioning and unified state, fighting between non-state troops, and now mitigating the pandemic. The country is currently divided between two powers: the internationally recognized “Government of National Accord” (GNA) who essentially controls the capital, Tripoli, and some surrounding towns, while the “Libyan National Army” (LNA, recently rebranded as Libyan Arab Army Forces, LAAF) of General Khalifa Haftar controls most of the east and the south of the country. Still in 2020 the conflict is taking a heavy toll on Libya’s already struggling economy, with funds that should be going into critical infrastructure redirected to the war effort by both the GNA and the LAAF. An oil blockade, imposed by the LNA, has resulted in more than \$4 billion in financial losses to the GNA authorities. The sudden drop in oil prices reduced Libya’s profits by 90%; oil revenues are the backbone of the country’s economy and 30% of its population rely on state salaries. As a result, in mid-April, the GNA announced a 20% pay cut for civil servants.

Before the latest rounds of fighting, Libya was ill-prepared to face COVID-19. Libyans used to seek medical treatment in neighbouring countries but, after the closure of all land and sea borders, this has become impossible. Both governments quickly imposed a lockdown and curfews on their citizens to suppress the spread of the virus. The National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), nominally part of the GNA but considered a neutral body, is operating throughout Libya under the guidance of the World Health Organisation (WHO), which has classified Libya amongst its high-risk countries for COVID-19.

However, beyond the civil war, which has been devastating the country, the aftermath of the global virus outbreak will have even worse repercussions. The fighting continues despite the UN secretary-general’s call for a global ceasefire in March, 2020. War has left healthcare systems ill-equipped to handle a public health crisis of any scale and recent attacks on its hospitals are making the situation worse. In short, the risk of the further spread of COVID-19 is aggravated by the growing levels of insecurity, political fragmentation, weak health and surveillance system, and high numbers of migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

## ***Health***

### Basic data

First case (West Libya): March 24 – a 73 year old man in Tripoli, returning from Saudi Arabia in early March.

First case (East Libya): April 7 - a 55 year old man who came to Libya from Turkey in late March.

Most affected region: Western Libya.

First death: April 2 - an 85 year old woman.

Cases per August 17, 2020<sup>1</sup>

- Confirmed cases 8,172
- Fatalities 153
- Recovered 933

The number of confirmed cases has drastically increased since June and the danger of a second wave of infections remains (see for more updates at ***Resources*** Daily updates).

### Underreporting

In Libya, as elsewhere, underreporting of COVID-19 cases is inevitable given the low testing capacity. The main reason remains the limited testing facilities, especially in the Southern part of the country. But, the inability of journalists to freely operate in the eastern and southern parts of Libya makes it hard to obtain reliable information about the real situation of COVID-19 on the ground.

### Misinformation

There is generally good information available and Libyans seem to have a good level of understanding of the COVID-19 pandemic and the preventive measures. However, the population seems to be less aware of where to seek assistance if they are displaying symptoms. Even though Facebook and other social media platforms are not reliable sources, they remain the main sources of information for most people. The National Center for Disease Control is praised for disseminating fact-based information. Their website is a good source, in addition to the WHO website. It has a live dashboard that is very up-to-date, detailed and accurate. On the other hand, COVID-19 has become the latest addition to an on-going information war aimed at discrediting the opposing camp. Widespread allegations of corruption and mismanagement of funds have fuelled distrust in the authorities. For more see ***Resources*** Other Resources *World Health Organisation* - About COVID-19, - COVID-19 - Questions and answers, - Myth busters and Daily Updates - *National Center for Disease Control (NCDC)* - Dashboard and *World Health Organisation* - Office of Eastern Mediterranean Region.

### Health infrastructure

Even before the coronavirus pandemic, almost 10 years of conflict has tremendously affected the capacity of the Libyan health system. The country's public health infrastructure has been neglected since the 2011 uprising - and even before. The health system, normally freely available to every citizen, has been weakened by the war. On top of that, numerous health workers had not been paid since last year until pressure from the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL). Libya's warring parties are worsening the risk of a COVID-19 crisis with attacks on medical facilities and intentional cuts to water supplies. Hospitals and clinics are both frequently targeted by the various armed groups and militias. Last year, there were 62 attacks on health facilities and one-fifth of the country's hospitals were closed. The NCDC formed a High Committee to Control the Spread of COVID-19

(al- Lajena al-Alia le-Mukafahat Waba Korona) with local branch committees in each municipality and region. Another Central Advisory Committee of health professionals was formed (al-Lajena al-Istashariya al-Alia) with its own committee branches in each municipality. Many health facilities are damaged and closed. Specialized staff and protective equipment are lacking, whilst the remaining hospital beds are occupied by fighters and civilians injured by the war. The continuing lack of supplies remains an overriding concern. Many health workers, especially in the south, are refusing to report for duty because they have no personal protective equipment (PPE). Around 75% of the health facilities are not functioning to capacity due to staff shortages, need of maintenance and repair, or are not accessible due to security issues. The roads are littered with fake check points where travellers are hijacked or kidnapped for ransom, placing anyone going in search of supplies or medical care in danger. Shortage of fuel and recurrent electricity outages are further affecting the provision of health services. Furthermore, local communities and armed groups are resisting the establishment of health facilities in their areas. While high-level advocacy has been successful in the release of critical funds for the national COVID-19 preparedness and response plan and back pay of salaries for health workers, adequate financial resources to combat the pandemic are still a challenge. See for more information on COVID-19 in Libya ***Resources*** [Other COVID-19 Resources on Libya.](#)

#### State regulations

Given Libya's political division, each side has developed its own response mechanism to the pandemic. The World Health Organization is obliged to speak with both authorities, which is complicating prevention efforts. The national preparedness and response plan for COVID-19 is still to be endorsed by the both authorities. In the absence of a coordinated national response, many municipalities have imposed their own regulations and taken their own measures such as establishing local COVID-19 crisis committees.

#### *Government of National Accord (GNA)*

The government in Tripoli took on preventive measures, fining any non-adherents, closing mosques and educational institutions, banning mass gatherings and movements among cities, imposing a strict curfew, restricting air travel, and instituting protocols of temperature checks in airports and land borders. All social activities such as religious services, sports events, and visits to museums and archaeological sites were stopped. Non-essential services were staffed at 15% of their usual level. Estimates of compliance with the above emergency measures vary with the most accurate at 70%.<sup>2</sup> For updates see below at ***Resources*** [Government of National Accord.](#)

#### *Libyan Arab Army Forces (LAAF)*

The authorities in the east have attempted to control and silence any voices remotely critical of conditions in the healthcare system. They also banned gatherings and closed institutions. Since international attention has since been on confronting the health crisis, both the GNA and the LAAF escalated military operations without fear of diplomatic repercussions. Both sides have access to weapons, thanks to their international alliances. It is obvious that, in this context, any serious national containment plan is doomed to fail. In addition, both authorities started blaming each other for importing the virus to Libya through foreign mercenaries. Both sides have also issued statements to their foot soldiers not to use any military equipment or weapons seized from the opponents, unless disinfected properly. For updates see below at ***Resources*** [Libyan National Army \(LNA/LAAF\).](#)

## *Society*

There are many vulnerable populations that are currently in Libya, such as women, prisoners held in overcrowded areas, minorities, hundreds of thousands of displaced people, and migrants - they have perhaps suffered the most. The long-lasting civil war has intensified during July-August this year. Locked-down residential districts have been shelled. Hundreds of thousands of migrants who seek to cross the Mediterranean through the country are stranded, with no legal status and around 150,000 people have been displaced because of the fighting.

The current lockdown and rising prices for basic commodities will have a major effect on the income of most Libyans and push many families into poverty. Most cities are facing shortages of basic items, such as eggs, vegetables, and wheat, as the country struggles to import produce in the face of global supply chain breakages and conflict in the western part of the country blocking supply routes. Soon after COVID-19 measures were implemented, food prices spiked in most cities in Libya. The average cost of tomatoes has gone up by more than 200% in some places, peppers by around 40%, while prices for hygiene items have gone up by at least 60%, with prices for gloves and masks having more than tripled.

A major concern during COVID-19 is that 38% of displaced households have reduced their health expenditures in order to cover their basic food needs. The situation is even worse for tens of thousands of, mostly sub-Saharan, migrants and refugees, who are crammed into detention centres after being detained on the Mediterranean by the EU-supported Libyan Coast Guard. There are also a growing number of reports of human rights violations, including hundreds of cases of arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, torture, and extrajudicial executions by armed groups across the country.

### People on the move

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Libya, the migration hubs along the coasts have been targeted by air shelling. The migrants are trapped without protection, prone to COVID-19 infection, and have limited or no access to health care due to their lack of legal status and discrimination against foreigners. Migrants and refugees, especially those in detention centers, experience overcrowding and insufficient access to food, clean water, and sanitation. 75% of refugees and migrants lost their jobs in March and April. Many were supporting themselves through daily labour, which has had to stop because of the curfew and other restrictions related to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Before Ramadan, some said they could only afford to eat one meal a day. Others are struggling because international money transfers have stopped. Some are facing eviction threats from their landlords since they have fallen behind with rental payments. The barrier to health care access for refugees and migrants in Libya is often not knowing where to go in order to get assistance. If COVID-19 reaches the migrant detention centers, where humanitarian and hygienic conditions are already bad, the aftermath is expected to be catastrophic. According to the United States Institute of Peace,<sup>3</sup> Libyans blame migrants from sub-Saharan Africa for bringing COVID-19 into the country, although there is scant evidence backing that allegation. For more, see below at **Resources** [Other resources for Libya](#) *UNHCR* —Libya – COVID-19 Response Update; *IOM* —Libya monthly updates and situation reports and *The United States Institute of Peace (USIP)* —Libya.

### Mental health

When the first COVID-19 cases were confirmed the most urgent needs, at that moment, were medical. However, as elsewhere, as the lockdown continued, stress levels rose, particularly inside crowded homes. The violent conflict and the political instability have already claimed much of people's resilience, even before the pandemic. Daily routines were broken, shopping was difficult, children had to stay in cramped rooms and jobless men and women were forced to stay at home - leaving families without income.

Regular health services, including mental health care, have stopped and people aren't being treated. Mental disorders from before COVID-19 are now getting worse. Mental health and psychosocial service support is, at an international level, led by IOM and Handicap International (HI). United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is also stepping up to provide mental health services to refugees and asylum seekers. Nevertheless, the badly needed psychosocial support is seriously lacking in Libya. For more, see below at **Resources** Other Resources *World Health Organisation* - Looking after our mental health).

### The role of women

The impact, response and consequences of the COVID-19 crisis are gendered in multiple ways and have an enormous impact on the lives and livelihoods of women in Libya. Libyan women already face great challenges, such as gender-based violence and insecurity. The societal changes caused by COVID-19 may further aggravate these dangers.

The UN Women organisation conducted a survey to capture the pandemic's specific impact on women in Libya.<sup>4</sup> They found that current COVID-19 prevention measures have negatively affected women's livelihoods, especially for those who are self-employed. Furthermore, they also found that women and children may be at increased risks of abuse while at home as gender-based violence (GBV) incidences are growing due to the deteriorating socio-economic situation. Psychological tensions and constraints as a result of lockdown/curfew are also increasing.

Women and girls have a higher likelihood of contracting the coronavirus than men and boys. Women tend to bear caregiving responsibility for ill family members; many work in the health and social care sector; this can all lead to dire social consequences for women and girls in a society that uses a woman's reputation to control them. That is why women tend to withdraw from the health sector altogether. In addition, essential services for women, such as sexual and reproductive health, may be deprioritized by health facilities so that they can concentrate on COVID-19 response, thereby putting women and girls at a higher risk of other health problems.

Female refugees and asylum seekers are facing particular challenges in accessing public health due to a lack of documentation required by many public health facilities. Pregnant women are choosing to deliver at home, presenting risks to themselves and their babies, because public hospital access is dependent on providing a marriage certificate among the required documentation, and they must be accompanied by their husband.

In short, the role women play in Libyan society has drastically changed since the outbreak of COVID-19 and they are dealing with more health threats than before the crisis. For more information and assistance see below at **Resources** Other Resources for Libya *Libya Africa Domestic Violence Agencies* and *UN Women - Libya* 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 and

*UN Woman* - 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; *United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)* - Survivors of sexual violence need healing and justice even amid pandemic, leaders assert and Former child bride, once sold to pay debts, finds a new start; *World Health Organisation* - Displaced or refugee women are at increased risk of violence. What can WHO do? and Strengthening the health system response to violence against women (video).

### Stigma

Social cohesion is already breaking down and discrimination incidents have been reported. People who may be infected with the virus are at increased risk of discrimination, including eviction from their homes. People have faced stigma if they have contracted or are suspected to have contracted the virus. Stigma and misinformation will increase the likelihood of potentially infected people not seeking care immediately and motivate them to hide the sick people and/or evade treatment themselves to avoid discrimination.

*“It is more acceptable to report yourselves with a bullet wound at the hospital than to seek assistance when you are encountering symptoms of COVID-19”* Abdulhadi Soliman, Fezzan Libya Organization.<sup>5</sup> For more information on how to fight stigma see **Resources Other Resources** *World Health Organization* - A guide to preventing and addressing social stigma associated with COVID-19 and What can you do to fight stigma associated with COVID-19).

### ***Humanitarian aid***

For almost a decade, humanitarian agencies have been supporting public institutions, local governments, civil society and communities in Libya to achieve stabilization, resilience and recovery, and contributing to shaping the conditions for peace and social cohesion in the country. According to UNSMIL, an estimated 893,000 people are in need of humanitarian assistance. In the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) *Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19*, Libya is considered to be one of the priority countries. The governance systems responsible for delivering basic services are not at full capacity due to prolonged insecurity and political fragmentation. Food security, already a challenge, is being compromised by the spread of COVID-19 and its socioeconomic impact on Libyan families.

The UN has activated the Crisis Management Team, to ensure a shared situational awareness, strategic direction and response to the unfolding situation. With its partners, it continues to conduct public health awareness campaigns amongst refugees and asylum seekers, through posters, text messages and social media, aimed at mitigating the risks of exposure to COVID-19. The UN Humanitarian Coordinator, WHO, and UNOCHA engage on a regular basis with all relevant Libyan authorities, including the NCDC, health authorities, and municipalities, as well as the committees established to respond to COVID-19 by the GNA and LAAF authorities to discuss strategies and gaps. Priority activities include support for health rapid response teams, personal protective equipment, lab diagnostic kits and supplies, establishment of and support to isolation sites, capacity building, and education/awareness raising. A national COVID-19 hotline was established to receive COVID-19 related phone calls. For contact information see **Resources Other COVID-19 Resources on Libya**.

Insecurity, bureaucratic obstacles, and COVID-19 restriction measures obstruct humanitarian access and the free movement of medical and other humanitarian personnel,

as well as humanitarian assistance, across the country. Both humanitarian programs and field missions experience great difficulty in mobilizing support to implement the most urgent and critical activities. In March 2020, humanitarian partners reported a total of 851 access constraints on movement of humanitarian personnel and humanitarian items within and into Libya. Customs clearances are slow due to the global slowdown on trade and transportation. Humanitarian flights have been irregular. Despite massive challenges, the UN and other humanitarian organizations are continuing to try to reach vulnerable people in Libya. For more information see **Resource** [Other Resources for Libya Arab.org](#) - NGO Directory of Libya; *Humanitarian Response - Libya*; *International Medical Corps - Libya*; *Reliefweb*; *UNDP - Libya*; *UNOCHA - Libya* and [Other Resources UNOCHA](#) - Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19.

## ***Heritage***



© Ali ALSaadi. Roman Propyleaum, Cyrene.

Given 42 years of neglect during the era of the former president Gaddafi, and approximately 10 years of widespread violence, it is no surprise that cultural heritage suffers from neglect and a lack of awareness from both current governments and the general populace. It is hard to tackle issues of cultural preservation when the country is facing instabilities and the government is preoccupied with other concerns.

The situation now endangers an outstanding range of cultural heritage dating from the prehistoric, Graeco-Roman, and Islamic periods, including five UNESCO World Heritage sites, all currently placed on the UNESCO World Heritage in Danger list. The Department of Antiquities is officially under the control of the Tripoli government but, in reality, is split in two parts, one based in the west in Tripoli and the other in the East in Benghazi, with no coordination of policy. On the positive side, at the beginning of the Libyan civil war in 2011,

NATO's Operation Unified Protector successfully protected Libya's most important sites, placing them on their —no-strike list and directing their targeting accordingly; the Blue Shield's post-revolution assessment reported very little damage to the sites from either air strikes or ground combat. Despite their problems, the Department of Antiquities was able to prevent the kind of looting that took place in Iraq after the overthrow of Saddam Hussein.

Yet today, archaeologists are, for safety reasons, unable to do site inspections and, consequently, there has been an increase in illicit trafficking of cultural goods in recent years. Reports on looted or recaptured antiquities have become frequent. The conflict is also encouraging unregulated and widespread urban development that is destroying archaeological remains. This was worsened by the introduction of a new law in 2013 that allowed people to reclaim land confiscated under Gaddafi, which led to some people acquiring archaeological sites, and illegally trafficking the objects from them, and/or bulldozing the sites for new constructions. Although archaeological fieldwork is at a standstill and no foreign missions can work safely in Libya, projects and workshops for capacity building are still being held outside the country, mostly in Tunisia and Italy. In 2016, the America Mission trained Libyan law enforcement personnel -Tourist Police and Customs officials - with the hope of forming the basis for a specialized art crime police force in Libya.

The country's local antiquities museums have all been closed and their doors welded shut. Other museums were also closed due to security concerns, and their collections were moved to places of safety during the revolution. However, with the on-going civil war, Libya's cultural heritage is still being damaged, not only from the chaos and lawlessness, but also from deliberate destruction wrought by vandals and religious extremists.

Cultural heritage is pillaged and smuggled to finance the criminal activities of Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) as long as it operates in the country. A number of important Islamic shrines, Sufi tombs, and mosques have also been seriously damaged or completely destroyed throughout the country. Prehistoric rock art at the UNESCO World Heritage site of Tadrart Acacus has been vandalized. Also public sculptures of the Italian colonial era have been destroyed by extremists.

However, it is also important to shed light on the efforts of Libya's civil society to protect their heritage. Several civilians have returned artefacts to the Department of Antiquities after finding them or acquiring them from locals. Others have volunteered to watch over archaeological sites and have rallied to assist tourist police to protect and preserve them. In the last couple of years, most archaeological sites, archives, and museums reopened in a joint effort by the Department of Antiquities and local civil society organisations (CSOs). The Department of Antiquities oversees efforts dealing with this crisis in conjunction with the regional advisory committee to control the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the heritage sector (Lajenat al-Jabel al-Akhdar le-Mukafaht Korona). They are now planning for reopening, but with insufficient capabilities locally, help is needed to source laptops and high quality electronic monitoring devices to enable employees and researchers of the heritage sector to work from home.

However, during this pandemic, sites are easier to access due to the absence of guards and workers. Heritage practitioners have expressed their concerns regarding unguarded sites outside of the urban areas. In the tourist industry, many people have been affected by the virus, like ticket vendors, tourist guides, and those who had a job in the tourist service sector, such as in hotels. Unfortunately, with a growing number of coronavirus cases, museums,



archaeological sites, monuments, libraries, and archives all closed again due to the crisis, with libraries and archives providing services on call. Field research, restorations, conservation efforts, and excavations have also been put on hold. The special police branch in charge of the heritage sector's security - Tourist Police (al-Shorta al-Siahiya) - is providing protection to all those institutions and, so far, no incidents have been reported. See also ***Resources Other resources Arab Network for Safeguarding Cultural Heritage (ANSCH)*** 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 and much humanitarian aid today is redirected towards fighting COVID-19 and assistance to the most vulnerable. Many aid budgets have been reduced, including in the heritage sector. While several countries created emergency funds for their own heritage sector, recognising the devastating impact of COVID-19, very few international organisations will fund heritage organisations in emergency situations (for more see ***Resources Other resources Arab Network for Safeguarding Cultural Heritage (ANSCH)***). However, there are some options: here are a few examples

- ***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. See: <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. See: <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. See: <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. See: <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. See: <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. See: <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. See: <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](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. See:  
<https://whc.unesco.org/en/funding/>
- *World Monuments Relief Fund*: No information available. See:  
<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 for others, humanitarian aid in cash assistance, food assistance, and the like, can be applied for at charitable (religious) organisations and humanitarian organisations. 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 select international humanitarian organisations with country offices in Libya or Tunisia, see below at ***Resources Other resources for Libya.***) 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.

It is important is 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. 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 at humanitarian organisations (see below at ***Resources Other resources for Libya.***)

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 under the specific heritage sector guidance in Part I: Heritage. 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 written by their staff for free access.

### Tasks

A crisis can sometimes be an opportunity. Cultural institutions where staff have been reduced, can still work on alternative tasks. This might be an opportunity to take care of overdue maintenance, provide extra training for staff, and take on non-job related but essential tasks like security improvement, or climate or pest control management. Switching tasks gives staff a chance to learn more about the wider work processes of the organisation which, ultimately, is very advantageous for the organisation. If a cultural institution is closed there is still a chance to make new plans, design new strategies, and update collection catalogues, executed and coordinated by digital tools. And do not forget to start a heritage awareness campaign, as many might not know what you are doing, how important your work is, and what the role of cultural heritage in society in general is. (See details 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 worthwhile 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 details, see Part III of the Guidelines - *Basic Digital Tools*).

Find some examples 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](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/>
- *Friends of Libya Cultural Heritage*. Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/FriendsofLibyaCulturalHeritage/>
- *Heritage for All* - Facebook Group: [https://www.facebook.com/groups/214091372432295/?ref=br\\_rs](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*. Libya: <https://www.coronatracker.com/country/libya/>
- *National Center for Disease Control (NCDC)*. Libya (AR):
  - Homepage: <https://covid19.ly/>
  - Dashboard: <https://ncdc.org.ly/Ar/libyan-covid-19-dashboard/>
  - Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/NCDC.LY/>
- Two new apps dedicated to COVID 19 and supported by NCDC:
  - *Speetar*: <https://speetar.com/>  
Determining health condition if any symptoms appear. Connecting directly to the National to determine the risk level. Communicating with the doctors of the centre 24 hours a day to follow up.  
Android: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.speetar.app&hl=en>  
Apple: Not currently available

- COVID 19-Libya:  
Displaying statistics that enables every person in Libya to know the number of cases in his/her city.  
Android:  
[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=ly.com.tmc.covid19\\_libya&hl=en\\_GB](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=ly.com.tmc.covid19_libya&hl=en_GB)  
Apple: Not currently available
- *Worldometers*. Libya: <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/libya/>
- *World Health Organisation, Office of Eastern Mediterranean Region:*  
<https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoib2E2LWFjYmQtNGMwZjk0OWQ1MjFhIiwidCI6ImY2MTBjMGI3LWJkMjQ0NGIzOS04MTBiLTNkYzI4MGFmYjU5MCI9ImMiOjh9>

#### Government of National Accord (GNA)

- *Government of National Accord*. Coronavirus:
  - Homepage: <http://www.pm.goc.ly/>
  - Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/LibyanGovernment/>
  - Twitter Group: <https://twitter.com/governmently>
- *Libya Ministry of Health*
  - Homepage: <http://www.health.gov.ly/>
  - Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/Ministry.of.Health.Ly/>
  - Twitter Group: [https://twitter.com/MOH\\_Libya\\_Media](https://twitter.com/MOH_Libya_Media)

#### Libyan National Army (LNA/LAAF)

- *Libyan Government*
  - Homepage: [www.gov-ly.website](http://www.gov-ly.website)
  - Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/GovernmentLY/>
- *Interim Ministry of Health*
  - Homepage: <http://www.health-ministry.ly>
  - Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/mohtazlibya17/>

#### Other COVID-19 Resources on Libya

- *Dynamic Dashboard for Libya:* <http://ow.ly/6Ghn50z9UTh>
- *International Committee of the Red Cross*. Libya:  
<https://www.icrc.org/en/where-we-work/africa/libya>
- *International Organization for Migration (IOM)*. Displacement Tracking Device: Dashboard Covid-19 - Libya:  
<https://www.iom.int/countries/libya>
- *National COVID-19 hotline*. Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC):
  - Email: [Libya.ETS@wfp.org](mailto:Libya.ETS@wfp.org)
  - Contact Number: 1404 (Arabic)
  - Homepage: <https://www.etcluster.org/emergencies/libya-crisis>
- *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA)*. Humanitarian Response. COVID-19 - Libya– weekly situation reports:  
<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/libya/health>
- *Wikipedia*. COVID-19 pandemic in Libya. Wikipedia. Statistics daily updated:  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19\\_pandemic\\_in\\_Libya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19_pandemic_in_Libya)

- *World Health Organisation. Libya:*
  - Country Office Libya: <https://www.who.int/health-cluster/countries/libya/en/>
  - Dynamic Dashboard for Libya: <https://covid19.who.int/region/emro/country/ly>
  - News: <http://www.emro.who.int/lby/libya-news/>
  - Twitter Group: <https://twitter.com/WHOLIBYA>
- *World Health Organisation. Office of Eastern Mediterranean Region:*  
<http://www.emro.who.int/index.html>

#### Other resources for Libya

- *Arab.org. NGO Directory of Libya:*  
<https://arab.org/countries/libya/>
- *Humanitarian Response. Libya:*  
<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/libya/health>
- *International Medical Corps Libya:*  
<https://internationalmedicalcorps.org/country/libya/>
- *International Organization for Migration (IOM). Libya monthly updates and situation reports:*
  - Homepage: <https://www.iom.int/countries/libya>
  - Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/IOMLibya/>
  - Twitter Group: [https://twitter.com/IOM\\_Libya](https://twitter.com/IOM_Libya)
- *Libya Africa Domestic Violence Agencies*  
<https://www.hotpeachpages.net/africa/index.html#Libya>
- *Reliefweb. Libya:*  
<https://reliefweb.int/country/lby>
- *The United States Institute of Peace (USIP). Libya – Analysis and Commentary:*  
[https://www.usip.org/index.php/publications?countries\[571\]=571&publication\\_type\[12\]=12](https://www.usip.org/index.php/publications?countries[571]=571&publication_type[12]=12)
- *UN Agencies in Libya (occasional Covid-19 news):*  
<https://unsmil.unmissions.org/un-libya>
- *UN Support Mission. Libya:*
  - Homepage: <https://unsmil.unmissions.org/>
  - Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/UNSMIL/>
  - Twitter Group: <https://twitter.com/unsmilibya>
- *UN Women. Libya:*  
<https://arabstates.unwomen.org/en/search-results?keywords=Libya&country=60aae8e98f5f41e080818a82d61b0fbb>
- *United Nation Development Fund (UNDP). Libya:*  
<https://www.ly.undp.org/>
- *UNESCO. Maghreb Region (occasional Covid-19 news):*  
<https://ar.unesco.org/fieldoffice/rabat>
- *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Libya – COVID-19 Response Update:*  
<https://reporting.unhcr.org/libya>
- *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA). Libya:*
  - Homepage: [www.unocha.org/libya](http://www.unocha.org/libya)
  - Twitter Group: [www.twitter.com/ocha\\_libya](http://www.twitter.com/ocha_libya)
  - Financial Tracking Service: <https://fts.unocha.org/countries/127/summary/2020>

## 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>
- *Aga Khan University - CoronaCheck*. (via Google Play):  
<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.edu.aku.akuhccheck>
- *Arab Network for Safeguarding Cultural Heritage (ANSCH) – Covid-19 Guidelines*:  
<https://ansch.heritageforpeace.org/guidelines/>
- *CoronaCheck* (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>
- *UN Women*.
  - Global Database on Violence against Women  
<https://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/en/countries/asia/syrian-arab-republic?pageNumber=2>
  - *The Shadow Pandemic: Domestic violence in the wake of COVID-19* (Video)  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llNP\\_bW-o0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llNP_bW-o0)
- *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>
- *United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)*
  - Survivors of sexual violence need healing and justice even amid pandemic, leaders assert:  
<https://www.unfpa.org/news/survivors-sexual-violence-need-healing-and-justice-even-amid-pandemic-leaders-assert>
  - Former child bride, once sold to pay debts, finds a new start  
<https://www.unfpa.org/news/former-child-bride-once-sold-pay-debts-finds-new-start>
- *UNESCO*. Culture and COVID-19:  
<https://en.unesco.org/news/culture-covid-19-impact-and-response-tracker>
- *UNOCHA*. Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19:  
<https://fts.unocha.org/appeals/952/summary>
- *Women now for Development*  
<https://women-now.org/>
- *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-others.html>
- Strengthening the health system response to violence against women (video): [https://youtu.be/Qc\\_GHITvTmI](https://youtu.be/Qc_GHITvTmI)
- What can you do to fight stigma associated with COVID-19? (Video) <https://youtu.be/vinh0IIG1p0>

<sup>1</sup> World Health Organisation, Office of Eastern Mediterranean Region (August 23, 2020). Retrieved from <https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiN2ExNWl3ZGQtdk3My00YzE2LWFjYmQtNGMwZjk0OWQ1MjFhIiwidCI6ImY2MTBjMGI3LWJkMjQtNGIzOS04MTBiLTNkYzI4MGFmYjU5MCI6ImMiOj9>

<sup>2</sup> Heritage for Peace (22 June, 2020). *Empowerment of civil society for the protection of cultural heritage in Iraq, Libya, Yemen and North- East Syria - Barcelona Workshop 2020* [Needs Assessment]. Not published. Interview with Ahmed Hussein, The Department of Antiquities, conducted 22 June 2020.

<sup>3</sup> Wilson, N (April, 2020). *Coronavirus Shows Why Libya Needs to Build its Institutions*. Retrieved from <https://www.usip.org/publications/2020/04/coronavirus-shows-why-libya-needs-build-its-institutions>.

<sup>4</sup> UN WOMEN (April 14, 2020) *Press release: Already impoverished and impacted by insecurity and discrimination, Libyan women are likely to be hit hardest if COVID-19 takes hold in the war-torn country, UN Women warns* [Press release]. Retrieved from <https://arabstates.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/04/press-release-new-report-the-economic-and-social-impact-of-conflict-on-libyan-women>

<sup>5</sup> Reliefweb (14 May 2020). *Human Security at Stake: The gendered impact of COVID-19 in war torn Libya* [Policy brief]. <https://reliefweb.int/report/libya/human-security-stake-gendered-impact-covid-19-libya-policy-brief-may-2020>



# Heritage Guidelines for COVID-19

## SYRIA– COUNTRY OVERVIEW

### *Introduction*

This chapter sets out the situation of heritage and heritage management in Syria 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.

As of 2020, Syria has been suffering from conflict for almost 9 years. The conflict continues to take a heavy toll on the life and economy of the people. The United Nations (UN) estimated that the number of deaths directly related to the conflict as of April 2016 was more than 400,000 with many more injured. The conflict has left Syrians with a lack of sustained access to health care, education, housing, and food. In 2019, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated that about 6.2 million Syrians had been internally displaced - more than a third of them children - and over 5.6 million were officially registered as refugees.<sup>1</sup> The Syrian health care system is a damaged one, leaving Syrians extremely vulnerable to any additional crisis, such as the outbreak of COVID-19. Since mid-July, the virus has spread very quickly in the different regions of the country. Even before the pandemic, the Syrian economy was seriously affected by the war. The economy is now in a deep crisis; prices are sky high and the local currency (the Syrian pound) has lost around 90% of its value, and it is expected to worsen. On June 17 2020, the US imposed sanctions on the Syrian government with the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act. This new law allows the US government to sanction businesses, individuals, and governmental institutions for economic activities that support the Syrian government. The implementation of the Caesar law led to the collapse of the Syrian currency. 80% of the Syrian population live below the poverty line. The curfew forces them to stay at home, leaving them with no means of income. Civil society organizations (CSOs) are concerned that very few people can work from home or can afford to spend even a few weeks without working, as many Syrians earn their income with daily labour. Clearly, the consequences of the protracted conflict and the break-out of the COVID-19 pandemic, the double crisis, has affected Syrian heritage immensely.

Today the country is divided into three areas, each under control of a different warring party. The first one is the Syrian Government area, the second one is the North East Syria (NES) under the control of the Syrian Democratic Forces and the third is the North West Syria (NWS) under the control of opposition groups supported by Turkey.

### *Health*

#### Basic data

First case in Syrian Government area: March 22 2020

First case in North West Syria: July 10 2020

First case in North East Syria: March 11 2020.

Most affected region: Ras Almara (close to Damascus)

Cases per August 17 2020

- Confirmed cases: 1677
- Fatalities: 64
- Recovered: 417

The numbers of confirmed cases, fatalities, and recovered patients continue to rise since the outbreak of COVID-19 and the danger of a second wave of infections remains, in fact since September the people who contracted the Coronavirus is growing again (see for more updates ***Resources*** [Daily updates](#)).

### Underreporting

In Syria, as elsewhere, underreporting of COVID-19 cases is inevitable due to limited testing facilities. However, the reasons for this discrepancy remain controversial. The Syrian Government, for security reasons, continues to prioritize the health care in the areas under their control. The reporting of, and transparency of, COVID-19 cases are lacking throughout the country. The official numbers published by the Syrian government are questioned by international organizations.<sup>2</sup> They seem to be unrealistic, particularly in the light of the small number of tests administered, and when compared to the numbers of the neighbouring countries. Syrian doctors are reporting a much higher number of people infected with COVID-19: they, and local health officials, also believe many people are dying of COVID-19 at home undocumented. The Syrian government has not been able to provide clear information about the spread of the virus since the outbreak began, and where the people suspected to have contracted the virus could get tested. Next, testing is considered a —security issue and thus only allowed in government clinics.

### Misinformation

Syria was ill-prepared to deal with a pandemic, after 10 years of war. When countries in the world were considering a lockdown, Syrian journalists were struggling to get the correct information on the COVID-19 infection. Panic and misinformation made it hard and the government retains a firm grip on the media. Any journalist operating in the regime-held territories - around 63% of the country – must have permission from the authorities. Misinformation about the COVID-19 spread was seen on both social media and the official government, including a statement that the military is fighting the coronavirus. False narratives surrounding the coronavirus undermine important preventive measures. In Syria different actors, seeking to further political and economic goals can easily manipulate information. 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. (For more see ***Resources*** Other resources - *World Health Organisation* - About COVID-19, - COVID-19 - Questions and answers, - Myth busters and *World Health Organisation*, Office of Eastern Mediterranean Region).

### Health infrastructure

The World Health Organization (WHO) reported in March, 2020 that Syria's fragile health systems may not have the capacity to detect and respond to the pandemic. Even before the war, public hospitals provided a low standard of care and this has only deteriorated in the years since, across all areas of the country. The risk is particularly acute in the opposition-held North West Syria and North East Syria regions. The two areas are outside the control of the Syrian government, and the people in them have no testing kits available at all. Syrians across the country will not be spared the consequences of the country's debilitated health infrastructure, but some will struggle to an even greater degree. Syria's health care system has been ravaged by years of conflict: 70% of healthcare workers, especially the most qualified,

have fled the country since the outbreak of the uprising that turned into a civil war. Consequently, the number of doctors remaining in Syria who are qualified to deal with COVID-19 patients is quite limited. Most of the country's public hospitals, and many temporary ones –including their staff, have been deliberately targeted and destroyed during the fighting.<sup>3</sup>

The average age of the population is now higher than in 2011. Given this, Syrian civil society organisations (CSOs) are concerned that the Coronavirus outbreak could lead to a large number of deaths amongst the older generation. The Syrian health sector's capacity to fight the Coronavirus is often measured against the number of ventilators and intensive care unit (ICU) beds, which are very low. However, the real problem in treating COVID-19 cases appears to be the lack of qualified personnel to run the few ventilators and ICUs. Many humanitarian organisations and CSOs are greatly concerned that the Syrian health care system may not be able to manage the COVID-19 breakout at all. Making the situation worse more than 13 million of the 22 million people in Syria depend on humanitarian aid, according to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).<sup>4</sup> Due to the war, the majority of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Syria now live in improvised houses and confined spaces, which makes maintaining the recommended two-meter distance almost impossible. Under these conditions, it is likely that COVID-19 will spread rapidly, with devastating consequences. See for more information on COVID-19 in Syria ***Resources*** [Other COVID-19 Resources on Syria](#).

#### *Syrian Government*

The health care system in the areas controlled by the Syrian government is very weak. Even before the war, outside the big cities of Damascus, Aleppo, Tartus, and Latakia, the country's health care infrastructure was of a very poor quality. This was especially true in the North and East of Syria. During the war, good health care became politicized and weaponized, and rendered as a reward for those who stayed loyal to the Syrian government.

As of March this year, the Syrian government's management of the COVID-19 crisis still lacks any clear strategy. More than one month after the receipt of PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) machines for testing samples from the WHO in April 2020, the Ministry of Health still had no capacity to carry out tests. People suspected of becoming infected have had to wait for days to receive test results, during which they continue to move around and potentially spread the virus. The same ministry has still not supplied medical personnel with enough personal protective equipment (PPE) and staff has not received any training on Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) measures for the Coronavirus. For COVID-19 updates in Syria see ***Resources*** [Daily updates](#) and [Government of Syria](#).

#### *North West Syria*

The worst situation is in the province of Idlib in North West Syria. Since the ceasefire on March 5 2020, more than 200,000 refugees have moved to displacement camps or to their damaged houses - houses they left abandoned after the fighting broke out. Some 3 million people, almost one third of the Idlib population, now live in crowded conditions or in IDP camps: they lack clean water, and have insufficient hygiene provisions and minimal access to medical care. Adequate hygiene and social distancing are nearly impossible. While the area was granted some respite from the Syrian Government offensive since the ceasefire, the earlier bombing campaigns put 61 medical facilities out of action. At the same time, medicine, medical equipment, and hospital beds have become dangerously scarce.

Just 60 beds for those 3 million people were available before the COVID-19 outbreak. For COVID-19 updates in Syria see *Resources* [Daily updates](#) and [North West Syria](#).

### *North East Syria*

A recent report by the WHO describes this region as one of the most underserved in terms of health facilities in Syria today, with the number of health facilities, hospital beds, and health care workers well below accepted standards.<sup>5</sup> Less than 10% of the public healthcare facilities and just two out of the 11 public hospitals are fully functional and no district meets the emergency threshold of at least 10 beds per 10,000 people.<sup>6</sup> Health experts have warned that the region has the capacity to deal with around 500 COVID-19 cases, at best. It is difficult to imagine conditions more vulnerable to an outbreak of the virus. The health authorities have only 150 ventilators for patients diagnosed with COVID-19. Medical staff is suffering from the little means at their disposal. Humanitarian organizations, too, need to make impossible choices in these circumstances. For COVID-19 updates in Syria see *Resources* [Daily updates](#) and [North East Syria](#).

### State and regional authorities regulations

Regulations and actions in response to the COVID-19 outbreak taken by the Syrian Government differ from those taken by North East Syria and North West Syria. For several reasons, not all people are following the measures ordered by the diverse authorities. In some areas, the will to follow the health measures is very low, which demonstrably helps to spread the virus. There is no united governing force in the country that can take the lead to ensure people adhere to the COVID-19 restrictions and measures. In addition, the bad coverage of the Coronavirus by the state-controlled media and the general lack of trust in public institutions reduces the effect of the COVID-19 messages delivered by the Syrian Government.

### *Syrian Government*

In March this year, the Syrian government formed a “Special Committee” to control the proliferation of COVID-19 and, to decide and implement the necessary recommendations and decisions. This committee is interdepartmental, with representatives from different ministries. By the end of March, the government in Damascus had also created the “Higher Committee for Health and National Safety.” On Wednesday, March 25, Syrian authorities announced a nationwide night-time curfew to prevent further spread of Coronavirus from 6 pm to 6 am, taking effect immediately until further notice. According to the Minister of Interior, violators of the curfew will be subject to possible detention. The country has suspended public transportation and ordered the closure of shops and markets. Additionally, all passenger flights into and out of the country have been halted. They took a first step to relax the initial curfew in mid-March. From May 26, the daily curfew was completely lifted, as was the travel ban between and within governorates. Since the March 20, markets have been allowed to open from 8 am to 7 pm, as long as precautionary COVID-19 measures were adopted such as the social distance and hygienic rules. Restaurants, gyms, swimming pools, theatres, cafes, and public parks remained closed for almost two months from late-March till late-May and after that they remained open. Mosques were allowed to re-open on May 26 every day, including for group prayer, providing physical distancing was maintained. Public and private transportation services also started again on that date. Universities and institutions were reopened on May 31, and preparations were on going for basic education and high school exams in June, which are the primary exams in the Syrian education school system. The General Command of the Syrian Army and Armed Forces announced suspension of recruitment measures for soldiers to join the army from late-March till late-May.

They also suspended legal procedures related to summoning charged citizens to court for hearings, and the procedures for prosecuting those who do not attend. Despite these relaxations, the Syrian Government has reiterated that a full curfew remains possible, should factors related to the virus necessitate it. Since the middle of July, the virus started to spread again very quickly throughout Syria, though no new lockdown measures had been implemented by the end of August (see for updates on regulations ***Resources*** [Syrian Government](#)).

### *North East Syria*

In March 2020 the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria issued a decree, valid from 23 March to 5 June, to prevent the spreading of COVID-19. The main measures taken by the authority are a daily curfew from 7 pm to 7 am, transport, medical facilities, shops, and markets are allowed to operate between 7 am to 7 pm and travel between districts, but not between governorates, is permitted. Only humanitarian personnel are allowed to enter and exit the area, however preliminary authorization has been granted for staff who work in humanitarian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to cross into North East Syria. The Tell Abiad and Ras Al-Ain border crossings, the main border crossings for humanitarian organizations, are reported to be partially open for some commercial and humanitarian shipments. All meetings and public events are prohibited but religious centres are allowed to open after they have been disinfected. Next, all schools, universities and other educational institutions will be closed indefinitely. Local authorities in NES relaxed some preventive measures over the holy month of Ramadan (April 24 – May 24). Takeaway/delivery food services were allowed to open from May 26, but all other restaurants, cafes, and sport halls remain closed. The preventive measures remain in place until at least June 5 such as keeping social distance, urging people who are not feeling well or show symptoms of COVID-19, the elderly and anyone with pre-existing medical conditions are to avoid attending any events (see for updates on regulations ***Resources*** [North East Syria](#)).

### *North West Syria*

The main authority in the Idlib region, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), placed the city of Idlib, North West Syria under curfew on May 29 2020. The HTS called upon civilians to adhere to the curfew without revealing the reasons. They also imposed a curfew for hours in the town of al-Dana, while launching a campaign against ISIS. Especially in Idlib, the curfew is impossible to maintain because one third of the three million people in the area live in overcrowded camps, where hygiene measures and social distancing are next to impossible to uphold (see for updates on regulations ***Resources*** [North West Syria](#)).

## ***Society***

The consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak have significantly impacted on the social, psychological, and cultural aspects of Syrian society.

### Mental health

The ongoing conflict in Syria has resulted in massive population displacement and growing needs for humanitarian services including mental health care inside Syria. The prevalence of emotional disorders such as anxiety and depression can double in a humanitarian crisis, and people with pre-existing mental health problems are especially vulnerable. More than 38,000 people appealed to the United Nations in 2013 alone for help after facing sexual assault or other gender-based violence.<sup>7</sup> Depression and other mental health problems are rampant across Idlib, where half of the population exists of refugees and IDPs.

Even before the war began, the country of 22 million had just 100 psychiatrists but around half of them have since fled the country. Today, the national mental health services are overburdened by the demands placed on them by the Syria crisis. Health facilities which previously provided integrated mental health services in Syria have themselves become casualties of war, with most either destroyed, damaged or not functioning. The shortage of trained mental health care providers is viewed as critical. The U.N. Population Fund released figures that illustrated that it provided psychological first aid and/or support for such violence to 33,430 people in Syria in the first 11 months of the conflict in 2013 and to another 4,800 in December of that same year.

Studies show that conflict-affected Syrians have problems that express themselves in a wide range of emotional, cognitive, physical, and behavioural and social problems (See **Resources** Other resources - *International Medical Corps* - Addressing Regional Mental Health Needs and Gaps in the Context of the Syria Crisis; *International Rescue Committee (IRC)* - A look into the mental health crisis in Syria). These problems do not necessarily indicate mental disorders but are more the result of the circumstances under which the people live. Therefore, improvement of living conditions may contribute significantly to improving mental health, in many cases more so than any psychological or psychiatric intervention. Next to individual strategies, social activities are important to cope with tension and stress. A few NGOs like the International Rescue Committee and the International Medical Corps are providing help in some areas in Syria (see **Resources** Other Resources). Strengthening and expanding the national mental health services is crucial for Syria's longer term recovery because the need for treatment will last for years after the war ends (also see **Resources** Other Resources - *World Health Organisation* - Looking after our mental health and Mental health care in Syria: another casualty of war).

### Domestic violence

Domestic violence against women and girls is not a recent issue in Syria, traditionally a dominant patriarchal country where men provide the main source of income and women run the home. In 2006 the first countrywide domestic violence survey showed that 10% to 25% of the married women experienced domestic violence. Four years later another survey found a serious increase of gender-based violence; then 33% of the women were subjected to physical violence within their family environment. Syrian law does not place legal controls protecting women from domestic violence. The penal code stipulates that husbands disciplining their wives in a form permitted by general custom is not a crime. To close this gap in Syrian law, civil organizations drafted the "Family Law" suggesting legislative measures to tackle domestic violence against women. It was presented to the parliament in 2007 with no further action taken due to the lack of a political will. This makes it very difficult to address and combat domestic violence legally.

In a violent conflict women have always been disproportionately affected. Most of the casualties in the Syrian conflict have been men therefore women increasingly constitute the heads of their households. This affects the traditional division of gender roles and left women to face progressively more and diversified vulnerabilities. In a recent report by Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) (see **Resources** Other resources for Syria) the authors observe that —Syrian women and girls have not been accidental victims of the conflict, but have rather been directly and deliberately targeted. Female activists who continue to play an essential role since the uprising since 2011, have been deliberately targeted and others just because they are women. Thousands of Syrian women were thrown into regime's prisons, yet the exact numbers are unknown.

Among the various types of violations, torture and sexual abuse of women have become a war strategy for the government in Damascus. The goal is to break the women, and thus the family and with it opposition in society. All armed groups are involved in cases of violence against women — and the Syrian government heads that list. For example, women are used as a human shield, forced to strip naked and walk on all sides of army tanks (see [\*\*Resources Other resources for Syria SYRIAPAGEBYPAGE\*\*](#) - Domestic Violence In Syria).

The impact of COVID-19 on women in Syria cannot be separated from their exposure to the violence and trauma of war and displacement. The pandemic has reinforced an unjust gender divide and revealed deep structures of injustice, inequality, and years of structural violence. A rise in the risk of physical violence for females was especially noticeable during the lockdown and travel ban. Women and girls were facing already specific barriers to access the limited health facilities that are available, but now these facilities were completely out of reach. In particular, women and children in IDP centers and refugee camps who are in the majority, suffer seriously from all kinds of abuse. The displacement leads to a rapid rise in domestic violence that includes physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, along with cases of neglect. As they are living outside their home communities, their support system is confined to their tent and their home is no longer a safe place. Women who have access to electricity and internet lack the privacy needed to seek online consultation. Children lack the resources for schooling at home and leave their education at an early age, forcing them into child labour, early marriages or unknowingly into sexual slavery. Female breadwinners seeking basic services are subjected to physical violence and sometimes are forced by local aid workers to trade food and lifts for sexual favours (see [\*\*Resources Other resources for Syria – United Nations Population Fund \(UNFPA\) -Whole of Syria Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility. Voices from Syria 2018 - Assessment Findings of the Humanitarian Needs Overview\*\*](#)). Women and children are not the only victims. Gay and bisexual men as well as transgender women, are also subjected to extreme sexual violence by government troops and non-state armed groups (see [\*\*Resources Other resources for Syria - Human Rights Watch —They Treated Us in Monstrous Ways Sexual Violence Against Men, Boys, and Transgender Women in the Syrian Conflict\*\*](#)). While the violence against Syrian women is omnipresent, women and girls living in the rural parts of Syria and those in the North and Northeast of the country are more affected (see also [\*\*Resources Other resources UNFPA - Survivors of sexual violence need healing and justice even amid pandemic, leaders assert and Former child bride, once sold to pay debts, finds a new start\*\*](#)).

The shame culture associated with violence against women, often restrain women to report abuse to the authorities and also prevents them to seek appropriate help. Family members will stop women to do so as it affects the honour of the entire family. Besides, there are no safe complaint mechanisms for the victims nor through government agencies, nor through hospitals, police departments and the public prosecution. That is why the discourse of women's right organisations on the impact of COVID-19 has shifted from protecting women in the public sphere to protecting them at home. Like most CSOs they shifted to online modalities. Other organisations have started implementing emergency and humanitarian work such as providing sanitary and hygiene kits for women. Kvinna till Kvinna, a Swedish CSO, send out a survey to its Syrian partners to better understand the impact of COVID-19 on women and girls and assist them to adapt their respond to the crisis (see [\*\*Resources Other resources for Syria Kvinna till Kvinna\*\*](#)). Today, Syria accommodates many different organisations working on gender-based violence operating in all 14 governorates and 198 sub-districts (see [\*\*Resources Other resources for Syria United Nations Population Fund \(UNFPA\) - Whole of Syria - Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility. Voices from Syria 2020 - Assessment Findings of the Humanitarian Needs Overview \(Draft\)\*\*](#)).

The Syrian CSO *Women now for Development* runs 5 women centers in Syria (see **Resources** Other resources). The *International Medical Corps* includes protection principles in all programs, delivering focused gender-based violence prevention and response programs to address specific protection needs in Syria and to provide care and support for survivors (see **Resources** Other resources for Syria).

The CSO *Abaad* offers a “Playing for Gender Equality” Program and an online learning course - Gender-Based Violence Case Management in Emergency Settings (see **Resources** Other resources). For more see **Resources** Other resources for Syria - Syria Middle East Domestic Violence Agency; *UN Women - National hotline Syria*; Other sources *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)*, - *Virtual Knowledge Centre to end violence against women and girls: Helpline Syria*; *Women now for Development*; *World Health Organisation - Displaced or refugee women are at increased risk of violence. What can WHO do? and Strengthening the health system response to violence against women [video]*).

### Stigma

A traditional and patriarchal society as Syria is organized around strict norms and values that are maintained by rigid social control. Stigmas, marks of disgrace that set a person or a group apart, are one way to uphold the societal order. Anybody who does not fit the firm social order, either willingly or unwillingly, can count on disapproval or discrimination. Social stigmas are commonly related to culture, religion, gender, race, intelligence, and health. Since the civil war Syrian women and girls who have already a weak position in society, encounter social stigma to an increasing degree. Females who suffer from sexual assault, especially rape, experience discrimination and social exclusion (see **Resources** Other resources for Syria - Lawyers and Doctors for Human Rights - Understanding Gender, Gender Based Violence and Stigma in Syrian Communities. A mapping of three different Syrian communities by Syrian First Responders. 2017-2018). Female survivors of detention, believed to have been raped, are regularly ostracized. A woman’s punishment is double: social punishment on one side, which could lead her family to disown her on the basis that she sinned, or the fear that she could pass stigma on to her children, as well as psychological punishment on the other side, as Rahaf Mohieddin, a Syrian psychiatrist, explains.<sup>8</sup> Another problem is the stigma for divorced women, stigma associated with mental health, stigma for the gay community and Syrian Arab women battling the Islamic State.<sup>9, 10, 11</sup> For a group of people who already carry such a heavy burden, stigma is an unacceptable addition to their pain. It seems understandable, then, that the great majority of the victims do not speak out about their experience with stigma, posing a further barrier to people seeking care.

It seems that the COVID-19 pandemic has provoked social stigma and discriminatory behaviours. The change of gender roles and isolation of already weakened communities, especially in IDP and refugee camps, stigma are taken a turn for the worst. The same is true for people who have or are perceived to have been in contact with the virus, as well as their caregivers, family, friends, and communities. They are discriminated upon for something that lies out of their control. To avoid stigma, some conservative families will not allow female members to be taken to the quarantine centers, even to visit the hospital or for other family members to get tested for Corona. Next to a lack of knowledge of the spread of the Coronavirus, public health officers consider the stigma associated with illness and quarantine as one of the biggest obstacles in fighting COVID-19.



For more information see **Resources** [Other resources for Syria - The Syrian Initiative's Campaign to Reduce Societal Stigma of SGBV Survivors in Syria - A Repeated Suffering: Societal Refusal of Survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence \(video\)](#) and [Other Resources World Health Organisation - A guide to preventing and addressing social stigma associated with COVID-19 and What can you do to fight stigma associated with COVID-19? \(Video\)](#).

### People on the move

The Syrian war has led to a rise in the number of internally displaced Syrian people. Millions of people have left their homes behind - the majority women and children. As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, the UNHCR estimated (2019) that about 6.2 million Syrians, of the 22 million, had been internally displaced - more than a third of them children - and over 5.6 million were officially registered as refugees (see **Resources** [Other resources for Syria - UNHCR - Syrian situation](#)). They all had to face unimaginable difficulties and hardships while trying to make their way to safer places; lacking water, food, basic health services and electricity in the camps and no way of paying their basic needs. More than half of the officially registered Syrian refugees live in Lebanon and the rest mainly in Jordan and Turkey. In the host countries they suffer from exploitation (working for a pittance), sexual abuse, and discrimination. Since the outbreak of COVID-19 the position of both refugees and IDPs worsened.<sup>12</sup>

The host countries experience deep economic crises themselves, Lebanon more than others, and the Coronavirus once again emphasized the weak economic systems. For the humanitarian organizations this means that their ability to continue to provide assistance to Syrian refugees is hampered. In addition, due to fear of social stigma and deportation, refugees with symptoms similar to COVID-19 are afraid to seek medical help. The hostilities in the province of Idlib, which are under control of different opposing forces, drove nearly a third of the inhabitants of North West Syria to the border with Turkey and significantly weakened the health infrastructure in the area. Taking advantage of the recent temporary ceasefire agreement, thousands of internally displaced persons decided to return to more safe and secure places where less difficult conditions than in the border camps exist. Yet, as the civil war continues and the frontlines keep changing, people will continue to be on the move, which in a pandemic threatens the lives of thousands of Syrians (also see **Resources** [Other COVID-19 Resources on Syria International Organization for Migration \(IOM\) - Displacement Tracking Device - Dashboard Covid-19](#)).

### ***Humanitarian aid***

Since the conflict started in 2011, Syria has become a destitute country and depends, for the greatest part, on humanitarian aid. Approximately half of the population (11.1 million of the 22 million Syrians) is in need of some form of humanitarian assistance in 2020 and half of those are in acute need. The war economy and the world economic crisis resulted in an unstable Syrian pound and led to an upsurge in the need for humanitarian assistance. The trade sanctions and restrictions imposed by the European Union and the US have, without a doubt, had a negative influence on providing humanitarian aid to Syria.<sup>13, 14</sup> In addition to all this, the crisis caused by COVID-19 has played a major role in increasing the number of people in need whilst humanitarian programmes were temporarily delayed. UN agencies have reported critical funding gaps to support and sustain current levels of response to these humanitarian needs.<sup>15</sup> Until June 2020, Syria received only 22.1% of their total budget needed for a COVID-19 response. By the end of this year Syria will need almost 2 billion dollars according to the UN to sustain its humanitarian support requirements and

to respond to COVID-19 pandemic. The UN established a COVID-19 Crisis Coordination Committee for Syria led by the UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator that includes the WHO representative. Though based in Damascus the Committee tries to cover other regions in Syria as well but UN organisations can, by their own regulations, only work with nation states. The WHO holds regular meetings to monitor the implementation of their COVID-19 preparedness and response plan. Nonetheless, weekly operational calls to North East Syria and North West Syria are on-going, including discussions on the development of strategies to deal with COVID-19 responses.

In general, since the outbreak of the pandemic in March there has been a worrying lack of coordination and transparency at all levels: within the country between the different areas, between the Syrian government and the Syrian people (the people do not trust the government), and between UN organizations working in Syria and the Syrian CSOs. This prohibits the organisation of an effective and efficient national action plan for dealing with COVID-19. In July 2020, the UN Security Council Resolution 2504, the mechanism which has allowed the UN to deliver humanitarian aid from Turkey into North West Syria, expired.<sup>16</sup> Since, the border crossing between Turkey and North West Syria at Bab al-Salameh has been closed. Undoubtedly, this will threaten the import of food aid, medicine, and other critical supplies.

Since the civil war Syria has an increasingly strong representation of civil society organisations in the country both locally, regionally and internationally. They work on various important issues and some of them work specifically on providing humanitarian aid. Syrian civil society has served millions of men, women, and children with relief, medical care, education, empowerment, economic support, and protection. However, many CSOs shifted their priorities to respond to the emerging needs and added COVID-19 related activities. The resilience of Syrian grassroots organisations to fast changing contexts as a result of COVID-19 and other overlapping crises has been truly inspiring. That the degree of organisation in the CSO sector is high is proven by the many CSO platforms, see *Badael*; the ‘Map of Organizations in Syria’ and ‘Syrian Civil Society Organizations Reality and Challenges’ by *Citizens for Syria*; the ‘NGO Directory of Syria’ by *Arab.org*; *The Syria International NGO Regional Forum (sirf)*; *Syrian NGO Alliance (SNA)*; *We exist - The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Syrians: An analysis by Syrian Civil Society at [Resources Other resources for Syria](#)*.

For international humanitarian organisations see *Aga Khan Development Network. Syria; Cordaid. Syria; Humanitarian Response. Syria; International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) Syria; International Rescue Committee (ICR). Syria; International Medical Corps. Syria; Near East Foundation (NEF) Syria; Reliefweb. Syria; Ummah Welfare Trust. Syria; UNDP and the United Nations System in Syria; UNOCHA - Humanitarian Response: COVID-19 - Syria. Weekly situation reports; UNPFA - Syria country office COVID-19 humanitarian response. Flash update # 3 May 2020 at [Resources Other resources for Syria](#). At [Resources Other resources](#) see *UNOCHA - Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19*.*

## ***Heritage***

Much of Syria’s significant cultural heritage has fallen victim to the conflict. Many historical landmarks have been damaged or destroyed, and hundreds of archaeological sites and museums have been systematically plundered and looted.

The destruction of Syrian heritage is huge. Many Syrian and international initiatives have documented the damage, including the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums (DGAM), the Association for the Protection of Syrian Archaeology (APSA), the Syrian Heritage Archive Project, Syrian Heritage in Danger (SHIRIN), and Heritage for Peace (HfP) (see for their websites [\*Resources Other resources for Syria\*](#)). Through its Cultural Heritage Initiatives (CHI) programme, the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR) compiled a comprehensive account of the damage to Syria's archaeological sites, museums, and listed buildings between 2014 and 2018. For four years the initiative documented many incidents of looting, theft, damage, and destruction. The records include military and human activities such as illegal excavations, and agricultural and urban encroachment. In addition, many actors in the Syrian conflict have deliberately targeted the country's heritage, most famously the so-called Islamic State. All CHI reports are available online (see [\*Resources Other resources for Syria - American Schools of Oriental Research \(ASOR\) - Cultural Heritage Initiatives \(CHI\) \(report\)\*](#)). Now the only group in Syria who is documenting damage is DGAM and Syrians for Heritage (SIMAT), a CSO from Idlib that collaborates with the Idlib Antiquities Center. During 2020 they realized different reports on documenting the damage (see [\*Resources Other resources for Syria - Syrians for Heritage\*](#)). To keep oneself abreast of the latest developments, follow the news on the aforementioned heritage organisations (also see [\*Resources Other resources for Syria Ettijahat\*](#) and [\*Other resources Arab Network for Safeguarding Cultural Heritage \(ANSCH\)\*](#)) and *UNESCO - Culture and COVID-19*. Heritage for Peace is publishing a monthly Damage Newsletter (see [\*Resources Other resources for Syria\*](#)).

The breakup of the Syrian heritage community caused by the civil war 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 the various communities even more. In addition, as in healthcare, many experienced heritage workers have left the country since the conflict began, leaving the heritage sector struggling. Significant funding has also been diverted away from the heritage sector since 2011. In all, this leaves heritage at high risks due to neglect, lack of resources, widespread economic difficulties, and lack of management, to say nothing of the risks from the violent conflict.

Since the pandemic control measures were implemented in March, the state of the heritage sector in Syria has grown worse. The Syrian government closed down the offices of the DGAM in Damascus and all of its offices in the rest of the Syrian provinces: some were semi-closed and some were expected to re-open. All the DGAM's main activities have been put on hold; restoration work has stopped, as well as archaeological field research. Since 20<sup>th</sup> March, all museums, archaeological sites, historic monuments, libraries, and archives have been closed in the areas under the control of the Syrian Government. The same measures were implemented in North East Syria; the Authority of Culture that is responsible for cultural heritage in the region stopped functioning from late March to the end of May 2020 because of the pandemic control measures. In addition, since the lockdown was put in place, CSOs have moved online and stopped their main in-situ activities such as organizing tours and lectures in big cities like Aleppo and Damascus, thus leaving many heritage workers in tourism jobless.

The DGAM has launched the 'Virtual Museum of Syrian Cultural Heritage', after they closed down, which shows examples of artefacts on display in various Syrian museums, and examples of archaeological sites.<sup>17</sup> This virtual exhibit will help academics, researchers and students to access information easily when the DGAM library is closed. In late June, the National Museum of Damascus opened after two months of closure.

Several restoration projects have restarted, such as the restoration of the Great Umayyad Mosque in Aleppo and the restoration of the souks in Aleppo.



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## ***Recommendations***

### Heritage Emergency Funding

In the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) *Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19*, there is no cluster for Culture or Heritage and much humanitarian aid today is redirected towards fighting COVID-19 and assistance to the most vulnerable. Many aid budgets have been reduced, including in the heritage sector. While several countries created emergency funds for their own heritage sector, recognising the devastating impact of COVID-19, very few international organisations will fund heritage organisations in the present crisis elsewhere. Still, we found a few examples (for more see ***Resources*** Other resources - Arab Network for Safeguarding Cultural Heritage (ANSCH) - 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. See: <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. See: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/arts/culture-development/cultural-protection-fund>

- *Gerda Henkel Foundation. Funding Initiative Patrimonies*: The Patrimonies 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. See: <https://www.gerda-henkel-stiftung.de/en/patrimonies>
- *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. See: <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. See: <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. See: <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. See: <https://en.unesco.org/themes/protecting-our-heritage-and-fostering-creativity/emergencyfund2>
- *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. See: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/funding/>
- *World Monuments Relief Fund*: No information available. See: <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 Syria, see below at **Resources** Other resources for Syria). 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.

When a member of staff is considering an income generating project, it is important to realize what the Unique Selling Point is. It could be producing copies of iconic artefacts (assuming permissions are granted), production of publications, organizing online training or other 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. One good example is to start community-based income generating activities based around a local archaeological site. This will mitigate subsistence looting in the area, a way to supplement the income of community members. Clearly these kinds of projects require a lot of creative thinking. For funding staff, you could propose an income generating project at humanitarian organisations (see below at **Resources** Other resources for Syria). 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 under the specific heritage sector in Part I of these Guidelines. It should be noted, however, 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 at <https://www.academia.edu/>
- ResearchGate at <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 written by their staff for free access.

### Tasks

A crisis can sometimes be an opportunity but staff can still work on alternative tasks during lockdown, such as conducting overdue maintenance and completing essential conservation tasks. Managers could consider whether it could be a good time to provide extra training for staff or to encourage them to diversify their responsibilities and experience by learning about and taking on essential non-job related tasks like security, site monitoring, or public relations. Switching tasks can give staff a chance to learn more about the work processes of the organisation, which can be very advantageous for the whole team. In addition, while an institution is closed, the management team can make new plans and design new strategies related to running the organisation, develop and update the institution's online presence, evaluate data collected on visitor experiences and respond to feedback, develop educational material relating to your institution, 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 also 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 worthwhile 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

The Syrian government is not able to offer any financial compensation for the Syrian people. As a result, local initiatives and solidarity networks have been formed in different areas to gather donations and to help poor people by providing food and services to those in needs. In these times of 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 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*). 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=ARDdn0BQiiUUMWW53VQBUZuL6tGY9alFi-zB9R8wtOiKMt-4cOqFBcjtF5WzwZWeMX\\_jOB1xYQZfpf9](https://www.facebook.com/ANSCH-110334927271070/?ref=search&tn=%2Cd%2CP-R&eid=ARDdn0BQiiUUMWW53VQBUZuL6tGY9alFi-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](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/>
- Syria Discovery Initiative. LinkedIn Group: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/4084744/>
- *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*. Syria: <https://www.coronatracker.com/country/syria/>
- *Government of Syria*: <http://www.moh.gov.sy/Default.aspx?tabid=246&language=en-US>
- *Worldometers*. Syria: <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/syria/>
- *World Health Organisation*. Office of Eastern Mediterranean Region: <https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiN2ExNWl3ZGQtZDk3My00YzE2LWFjYmQtNGMwZjk0OWQ1MjFhIiwidCI6ImY2MTBjMGI3LWJkMjQtNGIzOS04MTBiLTNkYzI4MGFmYjU5MCI6ImMiOjh9>

### Government of Syria

- *Syrian Ministry of Health*: <http://www.moh.gov.sy/Default.aspx?tabid=246&language=en-US>

### North East Syria

- *Defence of Emergency*: <https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2020/05/05/covid-19-in-northeast-syria/>

### North West Syria

- *Reliefweb*. Flashupdate: <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/recent-developments-northwest-syria-flash-update-29-may-2020>

### Other COVID-19 Resources on Syria

- *Human Rights Watch*: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/04/28/syria-aid-restrictions-hinder-covid-19-response>
- *International Committee of the Red Cross*. COVID-19 in Syria: <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/covid-19-syria-icrc-continues-assisting-millions-and-adapts-combat-virus>
- *International Organization for Migration (IOM)*. Displacement Tracking Device – Dashboard Covid-19: <http://syria.dtm.iom.int/COVID19>
- *United Nation Population Fund (UNPFA)*.
  - COVID-19 Situation Report No. 5 for UNFPA, Arab States (30 June 2020): <https://www.unfpa.org/resources/covid-19-situation-report-no-5-unfpa-arab-states>
  - Syria country office COVID-19 humanitarian response. Flash update # 3 May 2020: <https://www.unfpa.org/resources/syria-country-office-covid-19-humanitarian-response-flash-update-3>



- *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA)*. Humanitarian Response: COVID-19 - Syria. Weekly situation reports: <https://www.unocha.org/story/syria-un-continues-cross-border-humanitarian-response-amid-covid-19>
- *Wikipedia*. COVID-19 pandemic in Syria. Statistics updated daily: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19\\_pandemic\\_in\\_Syria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19_pandemic_in_Syria)
- *World Health Organisation*:
  - Dynamic Dashboard for Syria: <https://extranet.who.int/publicemergency>
  - Country Office Syria: <https://www.who.int/countries/syr/en/>
  - Mental health care in Syria: another casualty of war: <http://www.emro.who.int/syr/syria-news/mental-health-care-in-syria-another-casualty-of-war.html>
- *World Health Organisation*. Office of Eastern Mediterranean Region: <http://www.emro.who.int/index.html>

#### Other resources for Syria

- *Aga Khan Development Network*. Syria: <https://www.akdn.org/where-we-work/middle-east/syria>
- *Arab.org*. NGO Directory of Syria: <https://arab.org/countries/syria/>
- *American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR)*
  - Homepage: <http://www.asor.org/about-asor/>
  - Cultural Heritage Initiatives (CHI) (report) <https://www.asor.org/chi/reports/special-reports/Palmyra-Heritage-Adrift>
- *Association for the Protection of Syrian Archaeology (APSA)*
  - <https://www.facebook.com/apsa2011> Facebook Group
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jIB311HqkXU> YouTube Group
- *Badael*  
[www.badael.org](http://www.badael.org)
- *Citizens for Syria*.
  - Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/CitizensForSyria>
  - Map of Organizations in Syria: <https://citizensforsyria.org/syrian-cso-capacity/map/>
  - Syrian Civil Society Organizations Reality and Challenges: [https://citizensforsyria.org/OrgLiterature/Syrian CSOs Reality and challenges 2017-CfS EN.pdf](https://citizensforsyria.org/OrgLiterature/Syrian%20CSOs%20Reality%20and%20challenges%2017-CfS_EN.pdf)
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- *Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums (DGAM)*
  - <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/>
  - <https://www.facebook.com/dgam.syria> Facebook Group
  - <https://www.youtube.com/user/DGAMSyria> YouTube Group
- *Ettijahat*  
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- *Heritage for Peace (HfP)*. Damage Newsletters (Syria) <http://www.heritageforpeace.org/syria-culture-and-heritage/damage-to-cultural-heritage/previous-damage-newsletters/>

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- *Humanitarian Response*. Syria:  
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- *Reliefweb*. Syria:  
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- *Syria Middle East Domestic Violence Agencies*:  
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- *Syrian Heritage Archive Project*  
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- *Syrians for Heritage (SIMAT)*  
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- *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA)*. Syria:  
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- *United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)*.
  - Whole of Syria - Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility. Voices from Syria 2018 - Assessment Findings of the Humanitarian Needs Overview:  
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[https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/voices\\_from\\_syria\\_2020\\_arabic\\_final\\_draft.pdf](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/voices_from_syria_2020_arabic_final_draft.pdf) (AR)
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  - National hotline Syria: **Tel 00963 11 3120447**
- *We exist*
  - <https://weexist-sy.org/>
  - <https://www.facebook.com/weexist.sy> Facebook Group
  - <https://twitter.com/WeExistSyria> Twitter Group
  - The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Syrians: An analysis by Syrian Civil Society  
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  - Gender based violence case management online course  
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  - Information on homemade and disposable masks:  
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  - Staying safe at home and work: <https://www.akdn.org/publication/staying-safe-home-and-work>
- *Aga Khan University* - CoronaCheck. (via Google Play):  
<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.edu.aku.akuhccheck>
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- *UN Women*.
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  - *The Shadow Pandemic: Domestic violence in the wake of COVID-19* (Video)  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llNP\\_bW-o0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llNP_bW-o0)
  - Virtual Knowledge Centre to end violence against women and girls:  
Helpline Syria: <https://www.endvawnow.org/en/need-help>
- *Women now for Development*  
<https://women-now.org/>
- *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=](https://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-others.html>

- Strengthening the health system response to violence against women (video): [https://youtu.be/Qc\\_GHITvTmI](https://youtu.be/Qc_GHITvTmI)
- What can you do to fight stigma associated with COVID-19? (Video) <https://youtu.be/vinh0IIG1p0>

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<sup>2</sup> See for example <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/09/02/syria-health-workers-lack-protection-pandemic>

<sup>3</sup> See <https://tcf.org/content/report/un-made-list-hospitals-syria-now-theyre-bombed/?agreed=1>

<sup>4</sup> See <https://www.unhcr.org/syria-emergency.html>

<sup>5</sup> See <https://www.who.int/emergencies/crises/syr/en/>

<sup>6</sup> See <https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2020/05/05/covid-19-in-northeast-syria/>

<sup>7</sup> Miles, Tom (8 January 2014). UN Aided 38,000 Syrian Victims Of Gender-Based Violence Last Year. *Huffpost*. [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/syria-gender-based-violence\\_n\\_4562656?guccounter=1&guce\\_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly9kdWNrZHVja2dvLmNvbS8&guce\\_referrer\\_sig=AQAAADb9yhp9udNF0QAqq-Ru3Bz5gpGGcS1lnvM7qQ1J32KF97oOW5fkPqKiqewyROHTfmU2oo296CsvUoohoXcuwLVTFzj6k8rf9Xjnr\\_gBVb1R02tOhQGTxCCRnTLWvGAHjcK825CrpAnIqY1w-U-vFF0FOQ9l6AkP\\_DX6q0tYP2pri](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/syria-gender-based-violence_n_4562656?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly9kdWNrZHVja2dvLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAADb9yhp9udNF0QAqq-Ru3Bz5gpGGcS1lnvM7qQ1J32KF97oOW5fkPqKiqewyROHTfmU2oo296CsvUoohoXcuwLVTFzj6k8rf9Xjnr_gBVb1R02tOhQGTxCCRnTLWvGAHjcK825CrpAnIqY1w-U-vFF0FOQ9l6AkP_DX6q0tYP2pri)

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<sup>11</sup> Al-Torshan (February 10, 2017). Syrian Arab women battle IS, social stigma. *Al-Monitor*. <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/afp/2017/02/syria-conflict-women-jihadists-conflict-women-conflict-women.html>

<sup>12</sup> Rabat, Lujain and Gul'Nara I. Gadzhimuradova (June 2020). The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Syrian refugees in Lebanon and internally displaced persons from Syria. *Scientific Review. Series 1. Economics and Law* (No. 3) (COVID-19 and mobility).

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<sup>13</sup> Measures imposed by the European Union through the [Council Decision](#) are 2013/255/CFSP and [Council Regulation](#) (EU) No 36/2012.

<sup>14</sup> See US Caesar Law <https://www.state.gov/caesar-syria-civilian-protection-act/>

<sup>15</sup> See [https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/critical\\_funding\\_gap\\_june2020.pdf](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/critical_funding_gap_june2020.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> See <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/2504>

<sup>17</sup> See <http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=177&id=2557>

# 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, 2020<sup>1</sup>

- 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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 newspaper<sup>4</sup>, 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 cancelation 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.<sup>5</sup> 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](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=ARDdn0BQiiitlUMWW53VQBUZuL6tGY9aFi-zB9R8wtOiKMt-4cOqFBejtf5WzwZWeMX\\_jOB1xYQZfpf9](https://www.facebook.com/ANSCH-110334927271070/?ref=search&tn=%2Cd%2CP-R&eid=ARDdn0BQiiitlUMWW53VQBUZuL6tGY9aFi-zB9R8wtOiKMt-4cOqFBejtf5WzwZWeMX_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](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=eyJrIjoib2E5NWl3ZGQtZDk3My00YzE2LWFjYmQtNGMwZjk0OWQ1MjFhIiwidCI6ImY2MTBjMGI3LWJkMjQtNGIzOS04MTBiLTNkYzI4MGFmYjU5MCI6ImMiOjhh9>

### 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](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/](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-fye.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/yem>
- *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](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=](https://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-others.html>
- Strengthening the health system response to violence against women (video):  
[https://youtu.be/Qc\\_GHITvTmI](https://youtu.be/Qc_GHITvTmI)
- What can you do to fight stigma associated with COVID-19? (Video)  
<https://youtu.be/vinh0IIG1p0>

<sup>1</sup>World Health Organisation, Office of Eastern Mediterranean Region (August 23, 2020). Retrieved from <https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiN2ExNWl3ZGQtZDk3My00YzE2LWFjYmQtNGMwZjk0OWQ1MjFhIiwidCI6ImY2MTBjMGI3LWJkMjQtNGIzOS04MTBiLTNkYzI4MGFmYjU5MCI6ImMiOjh9>

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

<sup>3</sup> Chikungunya virus is spread to people by the bite of an infected mosquito.

<sup>4</sup> 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>

<sup>5</sup> 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>

**PART 3**  
**BASIC DIGITAL TOOLS**

# Heritage Guidelines for COVID-19

## BASIC DIGITAL TOOLS

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### *Introduction*

The world of Digital Services is ever expanding and ever competing for business and, in the recent lockdowns caused by COVID-19, Digital Services are gaining more attention. People need to be able to work over distances, to communicate and to share information and news.

This report looks at some of the most popular digital solutions that can be useful for communication and collaboration, looking at pros and cons and making recommendations. However, it should be noted that everybody's needs are different, and so there is no "one size fits all" solution. These recommendations are based on facility availability, cost, and ease of use; cultural concerns are also taken into account, where appropriate.

### *Be Aware*

#### "Free" services

Before moving to specifics, a couple of truths about the digital age need to be stressed. For the most part, nothing is free – even if it doesn't appear to have a price. If you aren't being charged, then the organisation that is running the service you use is getting money from somewhere. In some cases, that will be advertising or selling data. For some, the free service may be considered an enticement to try to encourage more people to take paid options. Those who use the paid option are, essentially, paying for everybody else as well. Some may be charitable organisations who survive on donations. The only truly free options are distributed as shareware – and then you are unlikely to receive support if needed, so you'll need to know what you're doing.

#### Internet Safety

Users of the internet need to be aware of general safety and security concerns. No matter how seriously a company or developer takes security, very few services are completely safe. As long as something is on the internet, there will be ways for anybody to get to it and find it, either by computer hacking, social hacking (e.g. phishing attacks) or various other means. Once something is on the internet, people can find it and store it. Even the most security conscious of companies will make mistakes, and users should be careful to review privacy settings of their chosen platform and ensure these are set as required. Try out a browser with better security like Mozilla/Firefox or DuckDuckGo and try add-ons like Adblock. Similarly, if you are offered features such as 2-factor identification (i.e. if you log-in from an unknown device you are asked to confirm your identity in an additional way), these are always a good idea.

#### The Cloud

The Cloud is a metaphor for the internet and is often used to refer to services that require the internet to function. If a file or data is said to be stored in the Cloud, then it means that it is stored on an internet server and can be accessed from anywhere with internet access. A Cloud-based service is one that requires access to the internet for full functionality (though some may have limited functionality when offline).

## Encryption

A big issue in internet security is encryption, which is how your data is kept safe from people trying to intercept it or see what you are discussing. There are various types of encryption, and even within those the algorithms used vary in quality. Most popular systems gravitate towards the best algorithms available, but not in all cases. Almost any system will use basic encryption, with the next step up (and the minimum you should accept if you are concerned about your privacy) being end-to-end encryption, meaning that the actual provider of the software never sees an unencrypted version. The best available is referred to as zero-knowledge, which means that the provider couldn't look at it even if they wanted to, as the unique key needed to decrypt the data is stored on your device.

## *Social Media*

Social Media platforms allow institutions to engage with their audience at home and have become a vital part of people's communication, allowing users to exchange experiences and opinions, express themselves, or gather knowledge. They are a key communication tool within the heritage sector. With the start of the Coronavirus pandemic, many cultural institutions around the globe have increasingly expanded their virtual activities on social platforms. Each of the tools listed here allows this, but most of them will have other functionality as well. As part of social networking, each allows direct messaging of other users, as well as posting/sharing more public content.

## Identifying relevant Social Media channels

To effectively use Social Media it is important to understand which platform relevant communities are active on. There are several websites who offer information on the social platforms that various populations use. For example, StatCounter is an Irish company that is analysing global web traffic. Some data are publicly available on their website, such as country-specific statistics on usage of social media platforms. These statistics can be helpful in choosing the right platform: <https://gs.statcounter.com/social-media-stats/all>

## Algorithms

Social Media, particularly Twitter and Facebook, are based on complex algorithms which are designed to offer content based on a user's favoured interactions, determining who will see your content. Understanding these algorithms is crucial to being able to create meaningful and visible content, and to enlarging an audience.

The algorithm is based on so-called "meaningful" interactions - it analyses the interactions of other users with your posts, and determines your "significance" on the basis of these results. This has a direct impact on the visibility of your page and your posts.

Four main factors boost the visibility of your content:

- Posts that trigger conversations (based on the number of comments and responses to comments your posts receive)
- Posts that receive reactions (via the "like" button)
- Posts that are being shared on other pages or via tools like Messenger
- The time someone spends reading or watching your post.

## Hashtags

Hashtags are used to group posts under a specific theme or relate them to posts of other people and organisations with similar topics. Although hashtags are most commonly used on Twitter and Instagram, they potentially expand the reach of any message.

## ***Filesharing***

There are many different options available for cloud based file sharing, and most of them have a free version available, or a paid option which increases the amount of storage available. These are good solutions for back-up purposes, as well as easily synchronising files across multiple devices or with multiple users – you can easily share a link to a file on your account, allowing others to access it, rather than sending the file itself via e-mail (which can be a problem with large files). Obviously, internet access is required for them to synchronise. Some options allow real-time collaboration on files, or easy sharing of files for collaboration.

## ***Virtual Private Networks (VPNs)***

In simple terms, a VPN hides your device's address when it accesses the internet, so that anybody watching (including your Internet Service Provider or telephone contract provider) cannot tell what you are looking at, or where you are doing it from. In some cases, this can also be useful to look at websites as if you were browsing from a different country. They are considered important for those who are privacy conscious or are concerned about being watched or monitored on the internet.

Currently, there are 183 different Virtual Private Network (VPN) options available commercially, and each has different pros and cons, along with costing and features. It would be impossible to be even somewhat exhaustive in a discussion of these here. Adding to the confusion is the fact that many websites offering reviews or comparisons of VPNs are receiving commissions if you purchase based on that review, so they cannot necessarily be considered objective. The best comparison we have found is available at <https://thatoneprivacysite.net>. This provides tables summarising or detailing (depending on preference) the features, costs and concerns with the available VPNs. Many of these offer free trials so that you can test them yourself before committing. Some of them offer completely free services, but these generally come with restrictions such as monthly data caps. It should be noted that a VPN is not 100% effective. Some websites will be able to tell that you are using a VPN and will block your access to the site based upon this. Similarly, there is no absolutely sure-fire way to connect to the internet completely anonymously. If you only need a web browser that can allow you to use the internet anonymously, then a good and simple solution is Tor Browser (<https://www.torproject.org/download/>). This is completely free but is limited to a web browser, meaning that other applications won't be protected through it. If you need a solution to cover more than web browsing, then it is difficult to make a recommendation due to the many factors at play. Start with the comparison at That One Privacy Site, and then do further research from there if necessary.

## **Applications**

It should be noted that software is being developed constantly, including updates to existing applications. We have attempted to make this guide as accurate as possible at the time of writing, but applications, listed in alphabetical order below, may have features that have been added more recently.

### ***Cisco Webex Meetings – virtual meeting service***

A system for web conferencing, holding virtual meetings and conversations, Cisco Webex is particularly notable for being able to accommodate one of the largest sizes of conferences.



The ability to share files during a meeting is good, though it isn't quite as simple to use as some other options.

<i>Cost:</i> Free for basic use, paid starts at \$13.50/month					
<i>Link:</i> <a href="https://www.webex.com/">https://www.webex.com/</a>					
<i>Windows</i>	<i>MacOS</i>	<i>iOS</i>	<i>Android</i>	<i>Linux</i>	<i>Browser</i>
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
<i>Pros:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• File sharing during a meeting</li> <li>• Free option is quite generous</li> <li>• Can accommodate up to 3000 people in a meeting (200 via video)</li> </ul>			<i>Cons:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All users require an account to join a meeting</li> <li>• Free account meetings are limited to 50 minutes</li> </ul>		
<i>Security:</i> End-to-end encryption is available as a meeting option and more basic encryption is always in use					

### ***Discord – social media and messaging (text, voice, video) service***

Discord delivers a broad range of functionality, including text discussion, voice and video calls, screen sharing and file sharing. It's a popular social networking tool amongst gamers and heavy computer users, though they are currently working to rebrand themselves to more attractive to other users. Discord allows users to create their own servers and channels within them to focus discussion on a particular topic or business.

<i>Cost:</i> Free (with ability to purchase cosmetic options)					
<i>Link:</i> <a href="https://discord.com/">https://discord.com/</a>					
<i>Windows</i>	<i>MacOS</i>	<i>iOS</i>	<i>Android</i>	<i>Linux</i>	<i>Browser</i>
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Pros:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will work on any platform</li> <li>• Invitation based servers can cut down on spam</li> <li>• Ability to create new servers and channels can help to organise topics</li> </ul>			<i>Cons:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only basic levels of encryption</li> <li>• Layout can make it difficult to follow conversations</li> <li>• Quality of connection for voice/video can vary</li> </ul>		
<i>Security:</i> Only basic encryption rather than end-to-end. Also limited privacy within a server – if somebody is invited in, they can see everything there.					

### ***Dropbox – cloud storage system***

Dropbox was one of the first household names in Cloud storage and is still very popular today. It provides you with a folder on your device that will automatically be synchronised with their cloud servers for backup purposes. Once these files are in the cloud, they can easily be shared with others and, once shared, several users can collaborate on a file at once. Dropbox uses block-syncing, a technology that makes synchronisation fast, and is very flexible - you can use collaborate on either Microsoft Office files or Google Office files.

<i>Cost:</i> Free (2 GB), \$9.99/month (2000 GB), \$16.58/month (3000 GB)					
<i>Link:</i> <a href="https://www.dropbox.com">https://www.dropbox.com</a>					
<i>Windows</i>	<i>MacOS</i>	<i>iOS</i>	<i>Android</i>	<i>Linux</i>	<i>Browser</i>
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Pros:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexibility in types of files to collaborate with</li> <li>• Strong versioning and roll-back support</li> <li>• Linux support</li> </ul>			<i>Cons:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very expensive beyond the free account</li> </ul>		
<i>Security:</i> Files are encrypted, but Drobox’s privacy policy states that they will scan files and analyse them for security purposes.					

### ***Facebook – social media service***

Facebook is the giant of social media with more than a quarter of the planet having an account. It allows you to follow and share news, enter into discussions, arrange meetings and other events, share files amongst others. It allows long posts (up to 60,000 characters) and is, therefore, suitable for longer and more in-depth discussion than its competitors.

Any use of Facebook requires a connection to the internet, but Facebook Lite, a separate app that can work with a poorer level of connection, is also available. Facebook offers tools to help a user to boost the visibility of their Facebook page, including statistics (via Facebook Statistics) that can give insight into how your visitors are using your page and engaging with you.

<i>Cost:</i> Free					
<i>Link:</i> <a href="https://www.facebook.com">https://www.facebook.com</a>					
<i>Windows</i>	<i>MacOS</i>	<i>iOS</i>	<i>Android</i>	<i>Linux</i>	<i>Browser</i>
No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
<i>Pros:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facebook already has a massive audience</li> <li>• Can be used for many different purposes</li> <li>• Extensive group functionality</li> <li>• Event management and promotion</li> <li>• Facebook Lite can help with poor network connectivity</li> </ul>			<i>Cons:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facebook has been known to censor content on behalf of governments (including Syria and Yemen)</li> <li>• Heavy use of advertising</li> <li>• So big that it can be difficult to find what you are looking for</li> <li>• Not available in all counties, though this can sometimes be bypassed with Virtual Private Networks (VPNs)</li> </ul>		
<i>Security:</i> Facebooks primary security concerns surround privacy of actual posts – Facebook has a robust set of options and filters for posts to ensure that they are as private as you want them to be, but users need to be careful to use them.					

### ***Facebook Messenger – messaging (text, voice, video) service***

Facebook Messenger is an integral part of Facebook, but is also available as a separate app. It provides users with the ability to message each other (either individually or in groups), to share files and to voice/video call. Messenger has recently added Messenger Rooms,

which allows larger groups to engage in a voice/video call (up to 50) which has been a welcome addition, albeit without some of the functionality of other solutions (beyond the voice/video call, it can only share screens – even having a separate text-chat requires a different window/app to be open).

<i>Cost:</i> Free					
<i>Link:</i> <a href="https://www.messenger.com">https://www.messenger.com</a>					
<i>Windows</i>	<i>MacOS</i>	<i>iOS</i>	<i>Android</i>	<i>Linux</i>	<i>Browser</i>
No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
<i>Pros:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrates completely with Facebook</li> <li>• Messenger Rooms are consistent (meaning that you only need to share a link once – it is then always available)</li> </ul>			<i>Cons:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can only receive messages from “friends” which can make it difficult to expand your network</li> <li>• Requires a Facebook account to register (though you can later deactivate this if you wish)</li> <li>• Requires internet connectivity to function</li> <li>• Messenger Rooms are limited in functionality compared to other solutions</li> </ul>		
<i>Security:</i> Only basic encryption by default, but you can choose to use end-to-end encryption for select conversations					

### ***Facebook Workplace – virtual workspace***

Workplace offers a very familiar environment to many, being modelled after Facebook, and has many different integrations to other software, so is a very flexible option too. It has a fairly limited free version, but the paid option is cheaper than alternatives and, if you work in a frontline, educational or non-profit charitable organisation, there are discounts available. If you have a Facebook Portal device (a separate device used for video calling), you can use it to access meetings set up through Facebook Workplace.

<i>Cost/user:</i> Free (Standard), \$4/month (Advanced), \$8/month (Enterprise)					
<i>Link:</i> <a href="https://www.workplace.com">https://www.workplace.com</a>					
<i>Windows</i>	<i>MacOS</i>	<i>iOS</i>	<i>Android</i>	<i>Linux</i>	<i>Browser</i>
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
<i>Pros:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses similar interface to Facebook, so will be very familiar to many</li> <li>• Many different 3<sup>rd</sup> party software integrations available, making it very flexible</li> <li>• Paid options are cheaper than alternatives (especially if you qualify for the discount)</li> </ul>			<i>Cons:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free version is a little limited</li> </ul>		
<i>Security:</i> End-to-end encryption is available throughout, so should be very secure.					

### **FaceTime – messaging (voice, video) service**

FaceTime was one of the earliest internet calling tools and is still popular amongst users of Apple devices. However, as the technology is proprietary, it has never moved beyond Apple devices, which is a problem if you have contacts that choose to use a different system. It is fairly limited in what it can do (only voice/video calls) but is very easy to use with excellent image quality and can handle calls including up to 32 people.

<i>Cost:</i> Free					
<i>Link:</i> <a href="https://apps.apple.com/us/app/facetime/id1110145091">https://apps.apple.com/us/app/facetime/id1110145091</a>					
<i>Windows</i>	<i>MacOS</i>	<i>iOS</i>	<i>Android</i>	<i>Linux</i>	<i>Browser</i>
No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
<i>Pros:</i> Excellent image quality Reliable Easy to use Available by default on iPhone (and other Apple) devices			<i>Cons:</i> Only available for Apple devices		
<i>Security:</i> End-to-end encryption is set by default.					

### **Google Drive – cloud storage system**

Google Drive is a Cloud storage solution that allows you to synchronise files between your device and a cloud server and to share them with others. If you have a Google account (e.g. Gmail) or one of many Android devices (that require a Google e-mail address) you will automatically have access to a free Google Drive account, which is generous. It offers collaboration on Google Office files between users.

<i>Cost:</i> Free (15 GB), \$1.67/month (100 GB), \$2.50/month (200 GB), \$8.33/month (2000 GB), \$99.99/month (10,000 GB), \$199.99/month (20,000 GB), \$299.99/month (30,000 GB)					
<i>Link:</i> <a href="https://drive.google.com/">https://drive.google.com/</a>					
<i>Windows</i>	<i>MacOS</i>	<i>iOS</i>	<i>Android</i>	<i>Linux</i>	<i>Browser</i>
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
<i>Pros:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very generous free account</li> <li>• Allows collaboration using Google Office</li> <li>• Photographs do not count against storage space</li> <li>• Massive amounts of space available if you can afford it</li> <li>• Good support for 3<sup>rd</sup> party applications</li> </ul>			<i>Cons:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slower synchronisation than other options</li> <li>• If you are using a gmail.com e-mail address, then your e-mails and attachments will be using some of your storage space</li> </ul>		
<i>Security:</i> Files are encrypted but Google’s privacy policy allows them to scan your content and use it to customise adverts for you.					

### ***Google Hangouts – virtual meeting service***

Google Hangouts is one of several Google services that allows for virtual meetings, depending on the scale required (it can accommodate up to 150 people in voice or 25 in video - Google DUO can work for smaller, or Google Meet if you need larger). On a computer (as opposed to a smartphone) it works via a web-browser, which can cause technical difficulties in allowing the use of your microphone or camera due to its use of pop-ups to ask permission to do these. Everybody needs to have a Google account to join the meeting.

<i>Cost:</i> Free					
<i>Link:</i> <a href="https://hangouts.google.com/">https://hangouts.google.com/</a>					
<i>Windows</i>	<i>MacOS</i>	<i>iOS</i>	<i>Android</i>	<i>Linux</i>	<i>Browser</i>
No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
<i>Pros:</i>			<i>Cons:</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No downloads needed as it works through a webpage</li> <li>• Anybody with a Google account can join or host</li> <li>• Can record meetings without additional software</li> <li>• No time limits</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited to 25 video participants</li> <li>• Can be difficult to set-up on a computer due to use of pop-ups (which many choose to block)</li> </ul>		
<i>Security:</i> Meetings are encrypted, but not end-to-end.					

### ***IMO – messaging (text, voice, video) service***

IMO is an app for messaging and calling contacts – in fact, it was one of the first options available for video calls. However, it has since lost its unique selling point as many platforms now have this functionality. However, it is still popular due to ease of use and is free (funded by advertising, though a \$1/month subscription is available which removes the adverts and provides 25GB cloud storage space). It doesn't appear to use any encryption at all, which will be a concern for the security or privacy conscious.

<i>Cost:</i> Free (with a premium option available for \$1/month)					
<i>Link:</i> <a href="https://www.imo.im/">https://www.imo.im/</a>					
<i>Windows</i>	<i>MacOS</i>	<i>iOS</i>	<i>Android</i>	<i>Linux</i>	<i>Browser</i>
No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
<i>Pros:</i>			<i>Cons:</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Premium account offers some cloud storage</li> <li>• Simple to use</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No encryption</li> <li>• Some users have reported problems calling international contacts</li> </ul>		
<i>Security:</i> No encryption at all					

### ***Instagram – social media service***

Instagram (owned by Facebook) is primarily used for marketing, brand creation and celebrities. Its functionality is limited to displaying and sharing visual material such as pictures, GIFs, videos and infographics with posts limited to 2,200 characters.

Instagram is especially popular amongst the younger generation (18-24) and therefore fits well for youth-oriented content. Hashtags are vital as they allow you to categorise your content within broader topics and themes which can be filtered and searched by other users.

An important point of Instagram posts and stories is the option to add a location (via inputting of a geographical reference), which can be done during post creation.

This allows content to be tagged to a place and users can filter posts by locations. This can be useful as such content is increasingly used by tourists to see what others have done at particular places. Searching for a location on Instagram will show every public post that has referenced that location. This does, of course, leave a trail showing where you have been, so you should only tag your posts in this way if you are comfortable with this.

<i>Cost:</i> Free					
<i>Link:</i> <a href="https://www.instagram.com">https://www.instagram.com</a>					
<i>Windows</i>	<i>MacOS</i>	<i>iOS</i>	<i>Android</i>	<i>Linux</i>	<i>Browser</i>
No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
<i>Pros:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very popular with celebrities and younger people</li> <li>• Strong at brand building</li> </ul>			<i>Cons:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The focus on image-based media means that Instagram probably can't be your only option</li> </ul>		
<i>Security:</i> Given that Instagram posts are, by default, publicly visible, the main concern here is that users should be careful that their privacy settings are being used properly.					

### ***Microsoft Teams – virtual workspace***

Microsoft Teams provides many of the benefits of virtual meeting software and also provides the ability to share files, schedule work and other management options. If you need a solution that goes beyond meetings into actually managing work or projects, then Teams may be a good choice. The free version offers many benefits with payment needed only if you want to increase storage space and security. There is full integration with Microsoft Office, so if you are already a subscriber or familiar with this package, Teams is a strong choice. It also offers integrations with other software, such as Yammer, Planner, SharePoint and OneDrive.

<i>Cost/user:</i> Free (Basic use), \$5/month (Essentials), \$12.50/month (Premium)					
<i>Link:</i> <a href="https://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/microsoft-365/microsoft-teams/group-chat-software">https://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/microsoft-365/microsoft-teams/group-chat-software</a>					
<i>Windows</i>	<i>MacOS</i>	<i>iOS</i>	<i>Android</i>	<i>Linux</i>	<i>Browser</i>
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Pros:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong integration with Microsoft Office products</li> </ul>			<i>Cons:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrations are limited to Microsoft applications and products</li> </ul>		
<i>Security:</i> End-to-end encryption is used except with cloud file storage, which is more basic.					

### ***OneDrive – cloud storage system***

OneDrive is Microsoft's answer for Cloud Storage and is a strong option. Many of the paid packages come with access to Microsoft Office 365 and are popular in their own right.

You also receive a number of free minutes per month in Skype. Whilst encryption is, generally, no stronger than many competitors, OneDrive has the option of placing select files in a “secure vault”, which increase security massively for those files. OneDrive also uses block-syncing for quick results. You can share synchronised files with others and, if they are Microsoft Office files, work on them collaboratively.

<i>Cost:</i> Free (5GB), \$1.99/month (100GB), \$5.83/month (1,000GB + access to Office365 Personal), \$8.33/month (5,000GB + access to Office365 Home), \$5.00/month (1,000GB), \$10.00/month (unlimited)					
<i>Link:</i> <a href="https://onedrive.live.com">https://onedrive.live.com</a>					
<i>Windows</i>	<i>MacOS</i>	<i>iOS</i>	<i>Android</i>	<i>Linux</i>	<i>Browser</i>
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
<i>Pros:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integration with other Microsoft packages (including Office and Skype) is excellent</li> <li>• Personal Vault is a very secure option for select files</li> </ul>			<i>Cons:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer support has been reported to be poor at times</li> </ul>		
<i>Security:</i> Standard encryption is used for most files, but the personal vault uses encrypts on your device before synchronisation and requires additional authentication to access, making it a very strong way to protect select files.					

### ***Signal – messaging (text, voice, video)***

If you are concerned with privacy, then Signal is an excellent choice for your messaging needs. However, with that additional security comes drawbacks – Signal can only call (voice or video) between two people rather than the larger groups that alternative solutions offer. However, end-to-end encryption by default makes Signal one of the safer options to use. It is paid for by donations and the developers have committed to keeping the service free. The platform has been blocked in some countries, but the developers have bypassed these with some success. However, the changing technical landscape (including U.S. Sanctions affecting what Google can do) make that success variable. A recent feature, developed to help in the sharing of images during protests, has been to blur faces in photographs.

<i>Cost:</i> Free					
<i>Link:</i> <a href="https://www.signal.org/">https://www.signal.org/</a>					
<i>Windows</i>	<i>MacOS</i>	<i>iOS</i>	<i>Android</i>	<i>Linux</i>	<i>Browser</i>
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
<i>Pros:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very secure encryption which is activated by default</li> <li>• Developers are active in improving the service</li> <li>• Can also handle your SMS contacts and messages</li> <li>• Time-limits can be used on messages</li> </ul>			<i>Cons:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limitation of only two participants in calls</li> <li>• Requires a telephone number to register, which may compromise privacy</li> <li>• Blocked in some countries</li> </ul>		

*Security:* Excellent encryption and developers are actively working to add additional features to aid with privacy

**Skype – virtual meeting messaging (text, voice, video) service**

Skype was one of the first digital solutions allowing users to meet on the internet, and is still considered a market leader by many, especially in business. Using it, you can call other Skype users at no cost and any other telephone through credit, which you can purchase either as you require it, or at a subscription (if you already have an Office365 paid account, it comes with 60 free minutes per month free). It handles meetings with small numbers well (up to 50 participants) and has a good design for text comments in meetings too.

More recently, Microsoft introduced Skype for Business, which focuses primarily on meetings and textual messages to others on a network. The two should not be mixed up – they are not compatible with each other! However, anybody can join a Skype meeting through a web interface if they have the link, so not everybody needs to have an account. You can record your conversations with Free Video Call Recorder for Skype (see <https://www.dvdvideosoft.com/products/dvd/Free-Video-Call-Recorder-for-Skype.htm>) though you should be careful and ensure that all participants are aware you are doing this.

<i>Cost:</i> Free to other Skype users or to host or join meetings, charges for calling non-Skype users					
<i>Link:</i> <a href="https://www.skype.com">https://www.skype.com</a>					
<i>Windows</i>	<i>MacOS</i>	<i>iOS</i>	<i>Android</i>	<i>Linux</i>	<i>Browser</i>
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Pros:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Webpage use as well as downloaded client</li> <li>• Ability to host meetings without needing to download anything</li> <li>• Some free minutes available with Office365 subscription</li> </ul>			<i>Cons:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance can suffer with large numbers of participants</li> <li>• Incompatibility with Skype for Business is unintuitive and unhelpful</li> </ul>		
<i>Security:</i> Not encrypted by default, but end-to-end encryption is available.					

**Slack – virtual workspace**

Slack was one of the earliest tools in the area of virtual workspaces but has been outclassed in several ways. It offers good flexibility in integrations with other software, but in terms of storage available, number of participants in meetings (15) etc. it simply doesn't perform well compared to competitors now.



<i>Cost/user:</i> Free (Basic use), \$6.67/month (Standard), \$12/50/month (Plus)					
<i>Link:</i> <a href="https://slack.com">https://slack.com</a>					
<i>Windows</i>	<i>MacOS</i>	<i>iOS</i>	<i>Android</i>	<i>Linux</i>	<i>Browser</i>
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Pros:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easy to set up</li> <li>• Huge number of integrations makes it very flexible</li> </ul>			<i>Cons:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited core functionality compared to alternatives</li> </ul>		
<i>Security:</i> Slack does not use end-to-end encryption, so security is lower than many alternatives.					

### ***Snapchat – messaging (text, voice, video) service***

Snapchat is a multimedia messaging app that is available on iOS or Android devices. It is primarily designed for conversations using images and video, but also offers text, voice and video calls (16 participants) and the use of groups. Its main selling point is that images and videos are deleted after 24 hours, but this does not guarantee privacy (there is nothing stopping somebody from taking a picture of the image, for example). Snap Map allows your contacts to see where you are unless you go into “ghost mode”, and allows anybody to see snaps based on your location if you choose to make them public, which can be good for tourism or sharing images of a particular place. Whilst it is against Snapshot’s policies, it is heavily used for pornography which may discourage some users.

<i>Cost:</i> Free					
<i>Link:</i> <a href="https://www.snapchat.com">https://www.snapchat.com</a>					
<i>Windows</i>	<i>MacOS</i>	<i>iOS</i>	<i>Android</i>	<i>Linux</i>	<i>Browser</i>
No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No (except Snap Map)
<i>Pros:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Snap Map is a great feature for geographically focused content</li> <li>• Pictures are only temporarily available by default</li> </ul>			<i>Cons:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mostly popular with teenagers</li> <li>• An integral part of online pornography industry which may make some users uncomfortable</li> </ul>		
<i>Security:</i> The temporary nature of images and videos makes Snapchat relatively secure, but users need to be aware that this does not make them completely safe. Tools such as Snap Map include geographic data, which could lead to risk of identifying a user’s location (though this is opt-in). Snapchat have not proven as rigorous as some in fixing security holes, but they do use end-to-end encryption.					

### ***Sync – cloud storage system***

Sync is the cloud storage of choice if you want a secure option – it is far and away the best for this due to the use of zero-knowledge encryption. It is more expensive than other options, and synchronisation is slower but these are the compromises needed for this level of privacy and security. The lack of collaborative tools is unfortunate but, again, with the encryption used it wouldn’t really be feasible.

<i>Cost:</i> Free (5GB), \$5.00/month (200GB), \$8.00/month (2,000GB), \$10.00/month (3,000GB), \$15.00/month (4,000GB)					
<i>Link:</i> <a href="https://www.sync.com">https://www.sync.com</a>					
<i>Windows</i>	<i>MacOS</i>	<i>iOS</i>	<i>Android</i>	<i>Linux</i>	<i>Browser</i>
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
<i>Pros:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zero-knowledge encryption makes Sync the best possible option for the security conscious</li> </ul>			<i>Cons:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not allow any collaboration</li> <li>• Slow synchronisation (due to encryption)</li> </ul>		
<i>Security:</i> As good as it gets – files are end-to-end encrypted during synchronisation and the use of zero-knowledge encryption means that even with access to the server, you need your account credentials to read anything.					

### ***Telegram – messaging (text, voice, video) service***

Telegram is an app for messaging contacts and making voice and video calls. It has seen relatively low pick-up compared to competitors (such as WhatsApp), but offers some excellent features. It can support much larger groups than most (200,000 people – though video calls are limited to 10) and very large video files can be shared (up to 1.5GB). Messages are stored on a server, so you can access them from multiple devices, and it has a “dark mode” where messages are destroyed (including on the server) after a set duration for those concerned against privacy.

<i>Cost:</i> Free					
<i>Link:</i> <a href="https://www.telegram.com">https://www.telegram.com</a>					
<i>Windows</i>	<i>MacOS</i>	<i>iOS</i>	<i>Android</i>	<i>Linux</i>	<i>Browser</i>
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Pros:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cloud based service, so messages are available as long as you are online</li> <li>• Handles very large groups for text chat</li> <li>• Handles very large video files</li> <li>• “Dark Mode” is available for the security conscious</li> </ul>			<i>Cons:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cloud-based, so requires an internet connection</li> <li>• Does not yet have a wide audience</li> <li>• Requires registration with a telephone number (which can compromise privacy)</li> </ul>		
<i>Security:</i> “Dark Mode” conversations are end-to-end encrypted, and other conversations still receive more basic encryption.					

### ***Twitter – social media service***

Twitter is a social network service that allows users to share news in the forms of “tweets” which are limited to 280 characters, though they can also have images, videos and links included in them. This makes it very popular for sharing information found online and provides a very streamlined service. It can be much easier to find people who share your interests on Twitter, as opposed to alternative services, due to the heavy use of hashtags (#). Like other social media, Twitter relies on an internet connection, but Twitter Lite is available as an alternative that does not require so high quality a connection.

Twitter's main purpose is for sharing ideas and receiving real-time information and news. It is generally used for professional networking, making it more formal than alternatives such as Facebook. It is a very active platform for political discourse and is increasingly being used within the heritage field for sharing ideas, news and engaging with other practitioners around the world.

Tweets are, by default, visible to anybody and so users should be careful with what they post. Twitter has waned in popularity over the last few years in the Middle East, so the audience is not as wide as it may have been previously.

<i>Cost:</i> Free					
<i>Link:</i> <a href="https://www.twitter.com">https://www.twitter.com</a>					
<i>Windows</i>	<i>MacOS</i>	<i>iOS</i>	<i>Android</i>	<i>Linux</i>	<i>Browser</i>
No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
<i>Pros:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many existing users</li> <li>• Very easy to link up with new people that share your interests</li> <li>• Twitter Lite is available to help with poor connectivity</li> </ul>			<i>Cons:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tweets must be short which can harm readability when trying to make longer points</li> <li>• Problems have been reported in the use of the Arabic language, where the use of profanity has resulted in suspensions (which would have been ignored in other languages)</li> </ul>		
<i>Security:</i> Whilst Twitter has had security problems over the last few years, they are committed to fixing them. Direct messages on Twitter are a common method of online abuse. Direct messages are not encrypted by default but have an end-to-end encryption option available.					

### ***Viber – messaging (text, voice, video) service***

Viber (technically Rakuten Viber) is a communication app. It has the typical features, including building groups and sending messages, images and videos, and can also make voice and video calls (up to 20 participants). Unlike many other solutions, Viber can also be used to contact non-Viber users (albeit with a charge). It is particularly popular in areas where WhatsApp has been blocked. Some users have reported concerns with how much information the software takes from your device before it can be registered.

<i>Cost:</i> Free to other Viber users, charges for Viber Out					
<i>Link:</i> <a href="https://www.viber.com">https://www.viber.com</a>					
<i>Windows</i>	<i>MacOS</i>	<i>iOS</i>	<i>Android</i>	<i>Linux</i>	<i>Browser</i>
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

<p><i>Pros:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to call non-users (albeit with a charge)</li> <li>• Available on desktop as well as Android and iOS</li> <li>• Available widely</li> </ul>	<p><i>Cons:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cannot only use desktop – requires synchronisation to a mobile account</li> <li>• Very intrusive into personal information on device</li> </ul>
<p><i>Security:</i> Viber uses end-to-end encryption, so calls and messages should be safe. However, Viber does interrogate your contacts information frequently, providing their servers with unnecessary information.</p>	

***WeChat – social media and messaging (text, voice, video) service***

WeChat is primarily a messaging service with group voice/video calling (up to 9 participants) but can also be used to share news and has other functionality which gives it a limited use for social media as well. It is very popular in China but has achieved limited penetration in the rest of the world. It is reputed to work well, with broader functionality than many of its competitors (including playing games with contacts, making payments and splitting bills), but many people have security concerns due to the owners of the platform being popularly believed to help the Chinese government with censorship and tracking.

<i>Cost:</i> Free (with ability to purchase cosmetic options)					
<i>Link:</i> <a href="https://www.wechat.com">https://www.wechat.com</a>					
<i>Windows</i>	<i>MacOS</i>	<i>iOS</i>	<i>Android</i>	<i>Linux</i>	<i>Browser</i>
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
<p><i>Pros:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broader functionality than many alternatives</li> <li>• If you want to reach a Chinese audience, this is probably essential</li> </ul> <p>Secure from non-Chinese surveillance</p>			<p><i>Cons:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Links with owner may be problematic for some users</li> </ul> <p>Limited reach beyond China</p>		
<p><i>Security:</i> Basic encryption is used, but it is recognised that the owner helps the Chinese government with surveillance and WeChat is a part of this. However, if you aren't worried about the Chinese government, it's very safe from anywhere else.</p>					

***WhatsApp – messaging (text, voice, video) service***

WhatsApp is, currently, the world's most popular instant messaging app. It has good group functionality for text-chat (up to 256 members – 8 participants for voice or video calling) and can be used offline (with messages synchronising when you go online again). You can share pictures and videos, though videos are limited in length. It has recently been purchased by Facebook and is expected to be integrated with Messenger in the future. It is user-friendly, though registration requires a telephone number. Unfortunately, whilst desktop and mobile versions are available, the desktop version will not work until it can synchronise with a mobile device, and lacks most of the features of the mobile app.

<i>Cost:</i> Free					
<i>Link:</i> <a href="https://www.whatsapp.com">https://www.whatsapp.com</a>					
<i>Windows</i>	<i>MacOS</i>	<i>iOS</i>	<i>Android</i>	<i>Linux</i>	<i>Browser</i>
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
<i>Pros:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easy to use</li> <li>• Already widely adopted</li> <li>• Data is stored on device, rather than a server, meaning stored data is available when the internet is not available</li> <li>• Good group functionality</li> </ul>			<i>Cons:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As messages are stored on device rather than a server, you will lose old messages when changing device</li> <li>• Registration requires a telephone number</li> <li>• Desktop app lacks functionality compared to mobile app</li> </ul>		
<i>Security:</i> End-to-end encryption means that messages should reach their destination securely, but the storage of messages on the device makes that device the weak link – if you lose your device, then not only do you lose your messages, but anybody who finds it may be able to read your messages without adequate security on the device itself.					

### ***Zoom – virtual meeting service***

Zoom has become very popular during recent lockdowns and has become the meeting room of choice for many academic institutions because of its facilities. It handles large meetings well because it works on a peer-to-peer basis, rather than server-client, and is very smooth. It also provides many tools to the meeting host, such as muting individuals and separating discussions into individual rooms and then bringing participants together again. The meeting and all chats can be downloaded. Meetings can have up to 100 participants, with that increasing to 500 if a “large meeting plan” add-on is purchased. Webinars can have up to 100 panelists with video, audio and screen sharing, with up to 10,000 viewers.

The downside of this it costs – free accounts can only host meetings for up to 40 minutes (unless they are between only two people). However, only the host needs a paid account to lift these limits. Not every participant needs a Zoom account and can join the meeting providing they have the link and password.

Zoom has had many security issues in recent months, though many of these have come from careless use (such as not keeping links to meetings private) but Zoom has published a great deal of guidance to help with these issues. Users also need to be aware that text chats, even between individuals, are automatically downloaded by the host if they choose to save the meeting. There are other security concerns, such as six-digit passwords for meetings being easy to break-through, but Zoom is working to fix these problems.

<i>Cost:</i> Free for basic use, paid use starts at \$14.99/month					
<i>Link:</i> <a href="https://zoom.us">https://zoom.us</a>					
<i>Windows</i>	<i>MacOS</i>	<i>iOS</i>	<i>Android</i>	<i>Linux</i>	<i>Browser</i>
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

<p><i>Pros:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easy to use</li> <li>• Peer-to-peer platform provides a strong and reliable performance</li> <li>• Full online meeting solution, including breakout rooms and other features</li> </ul>	<p><i>Cons:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free accounts are limited to hosting one-to-one meetings or 40 minute maximum</li> <li>• Hosts need to remember to use the privacy and security options that are available</li> <li>• There are still some outstanding security concerns (such as with passwords)</li> </ul>
<p><i>Security:</i> Zoom uses end-to-end encryption and has an optional (albeit weak) password function to join a meeting. However, meeting hosts need to be careful when they create their meetings – otherwise anybody with the link may be able to join.</p>	

## Recommendations

Which service you should choose will always depend on your own needs and requirements, as well as the budget you have available and your own confidence in computer or device use. In many cases, it is worth having multiple solutions available to you – they offer different benefits, and your audience or other contacts may have different preferences to yourself.

### *Social Media*

Depending on the needs and human capacity of your institution, choose the platforms that are most relevant for your work. Facebook is best used to increase the interaction with your local community and build up a meaningful relationship. As Twitter is rarely used in MENA region countries, the focus of your work on Twitter should be to interact and network with the international heritage community and raise awareness of what is happening in your institution or site. Use relevant hashtags to be more easily found by other users – (see the different chapters on heritage (Part II) for more details on heritage-related hashtags and content production).

Use Instagram to brand your institution and bring it to the attention of influencers, and followers who have a big audience. This is the platform where you share visual material to make your institution attractive for others.

Keep in mind that visuality and continuity is key to all platforms. Visual posts attract a larger audience, and the continuity of regular posts keeps them engaged.

Discord can be a good choice if you are looking to find or start a discussion about a particular topic, but isn't as user-friendly or as easy to read as the other options.

### *Messaging*

WhatsApp is the current leader purely through how many people currently use it, though Telegram and Signal offer better security. However, most of them are available for free, so it is worth using as many as you are confident keeping track of, in order to stay in contact with people that have made different choices.

### *Virtual Meetings*

Despite the security concerns and higher cost, Zoom is probably the best option for meetings – it generally works to a very high standard and has greater functionality than others. However, if that cost is prohibitive then Skype or Google Hangouts make good free alternatives. Discord can also work well, though security is weaker.

### ***Filesharing***

All of them make good options depending on your needs. If you have an Office365 account anyway, then you receive significantly more OneDrive space which makes it an easy choice. Otherwise, it depends on how much you need to work collaboratively, your budget, and your concern for security.

### ***Virtual Workspaces***

Facebook Workplace is the cheapest option (especially if you qualify for the discounts), has many powerful integrations, and brings the familiarity of the Facebook interface. If you can afford it, it's very good. On the other hand, Microsoft Teams offers a stronger free option, and you may already have access to the higher-level plans through an Office365 subscription. However, before you decide to spend on one of these solutions, be sure you need one – you can achieve much of the same functionality through other services – they just won't all be in the same place.

### ***Decentralised Solutions***

Most of the options mentioned above have the flaw that they require you to be online when you use them. There may also be concerns for privacy, especially with American hosted data.

### ***Scuttlebutt – decentralised protocol for messaging and social media***

There is also the option of moving to a decentralised solution – one such being Scuttlebutt, developed in New Zealand. It works on a peer-to-peer basis, so everything is shared from one device to another when they happen to be on the same network or, if you are connected to the internet, you can choose to update using “pubs” – or central servers that work purely to pass information along without needing to be on the same network as another user. The encryption solution is strong, using unique keys identified for pairs of users, so you can only decrypt something if it was intended for you.

However, the true power is not needing to be constantly online. As everything is stored on your device, you only need to go onto a network or the internet occasionally, which synchronises everything relevant onto your device.

<i>Cost:</i> Free					
<i>Link:</i> <a href="https://scuttlebutt.nz/">https://scuttlebutt.nz/</a>					
<i>Windows</i>	<i>MacOS</i>	<i>iOS</i>	<i>Android</i>	<i>Linux</i>	<i>Browser</i>
Varies by application					
<i>Pros:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Decentralised solutions do not require you to always be connected to the internet</li><li>• Absolute privacy as all data is passed peer-to-peer rather than through servers</li><li>• Open-source so new uses are being developed</li></ul>			<i>Cons:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Making a start can be trickier than traditional solutions</li><li>• Requires more technical knowledge than some</li></ul>		
<i>Security:</i> All data is held on your device, so is as secure as your device is. Everything is encrypted, with decryption occurring on each device as required (if it has the appropriate key), so security is very strong.					

As Scuttlebutt is a protocol rather than a platform in its own right, it is possible to create new applications to take advantage of it, or simply use ones that have already been created (such as Patchwork – the Scuttlebutt enabled news and message sharing app, or Manyverse which is a social network). It requires a little more work, as you might need to build your network from scratch, but it can solve many of the problems inherent in most internet-based services.