



Empowerment of civil society for the protection of cultural heritage in conflict and post-conflict areas

“Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Libya”

Date:	3-4 March 2022
Time:	(10:30 – 16:30 CET)
Location:	Virtual Zoom Platform
Moderator(s):	Heritage for Peace Organization
Registration link	https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYkfuigqzkuHdyMm7IHsvdceJmNQx7xmC
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Abstract

This conference will present the Arab Network of Civil Society Organizations to Safeguard Cultural Heritage (ANSCH) projects concerning safeguarding cultural heritage resources in the Arab region, as well as negotiating challenges and opportunities facing emerging civil society organizations (CSOs) in wartime. Representatives from Libya, Yemen, Iraq, and Syria, civil society organizations will speak about their experiences in protecting the cultural heritage in conflict and post-conflict zones. On the second day, they will present scenarios of challenges and opportunities they are encountering in protecting Heritage. Furthermore, Heritage for Peace Organization represented by its president will discuss issues related to the implemented projects by ANSCH, ANSCH’s future plan, and assess the needs and potential support to the participants. Funding agencies and experts in the field of heritage preservation will contribute to the conference by giving support and further recommendation.

Note: Sessions in this conference will be held in English and interpretations in Arabic will be available.



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Background

The so-called “the Arab Spring” spread across many countries in the Middle East and resulted in serious political change in countries like Egypt, Syria, Libya, Iraq, Yemen, and Tunisia. Countries such as Yemen, Libya, Syria, and Iraq suffered severe damage and turned into devastating civil wars that affected every aspect of life. Not only have the population of those countries suffered, but also the cultural heritage resources of those countries. Thus, the indiscriminate bombardment of urban city centers, using archeological sites for military purposes, trafficking of archeological remains, looting, and vandalism persuaded UNESCO to place several World Heritage sites on its danger list.

Worrisome information and reports about the destruction of heritage resources have approved the need for more significant efforts to protect heritage by all those involved in safeguarding cultural heritage. In line with the local community engagement, many international institutions and organizations played a prominent role in preventing further damage and vandalism, as well as monitoring trafficking and illicit excavations. In collaboration with partners, Heritage for Peace Organization conducted pioneered projects to protect cultural heritage in Syria and in the region, where the latest is the Arab network of Civil Society to safeguard Cultural Heritage (ANSCH), and funded by the International Alliance for the Protection of Cultural Heritage in Conflict Areas (ALIPH). ANSCH connects with governmental and non-governmental agencies, and civil society organizations and makes connections with the local communities to design protection projects needed in Arab countries. ANSCH’s framework focuses now on cultural heritage zones in Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen. However, in the absence of implementing national and international regulations that are concerned with safeguarding Heritage, there is an urgent need to address first-aid measures and principles to protect tangible and intangible cultural heritage, as well as to foster and empower the role of civil society organizations.





ANSCH's Work plan

The Arab Network of Civil Society Organizations to Safeguard Cultural Heritage (ANSCH) is a joint initiative of Heritage for Peace Organization (H4P) in coordination with several civil society organizations (CSOs) in different Arab countries (<https://ansch.heritageforpeace.org/network-of-csos/>). ANSCH was launched in 2020 and funded by the financial support of the International Alliance for the Protection of Cultural Heritage in Conflict Areas (ALIPH). ANSCH works with government agencies, CSOs, and nonprofit organizations to identify, manage, plan, and conserve archeological sites, historic monuments, museums, and other cultural heritage resources. This conference represents the first activity of “Empowerment of civil society for the protection of cultural heritage in conflict and post-conflict areas” which includes a two-day workshop. The first day of the workshop will be dedicated to the presentation of the work of CSOs from those selected countries. The second day will be dedicated to discussing the challenges and needs of cultural heritage in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Libya.

Second activity: Organization of a series of three capacity-building workshops in Arabic for the staff of the civil society organizations. These will be mainly online and via Zoom and through it they will cover the followings:

- Project management, strategic planning
- Community participation in heritage activities for post-conflict peacebuilding and reconciliation.
- Promotion, communication and dissemination. The final configuration of modules/units will be defined through a participatory needs analysis with local actors. Each workshop will remain available for use on demand, translated into Arabic and delivered in modules using text, video and graphic formats. One result of the training will be the identification of a group of trainers who are trained in the methods to replicate these workshops.

Third Activity: set up ANSCH platform for civil society organizations to share knowledge, skills and experiences.





Fourth Activity: Launch a widespread campaign to support community awareness and engagement in protecting Heritage in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Libya and by enhancement of the ANSCH platform and social media network to communicate with stakeholders. (ANSCH's pages on Twitter: https://twitter.com/ANSCH_1), Facebook; <https://www.facebook.com/ANSCH-110334927271070> and LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/ansch>

Fifth activity: Final report for the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation.



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