

Addressing the illicit trafficking of cultural property at the end of the market chain

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Protecting Cultural Heritage –an Imperative for Humanity © UNESCO

On Wednesday 2 March 2016, the Permanent Missions of Jordan and Italy to the United Nations, together with UNESCO, INTERPOL, and UNODC, organized the First Meeting on Art Markets of Stolen Works of Art as part of the partnership initiative “Protecting Cultural Heritage –an Imperative for Humanity: Acting together against the destruction and trafficking of cultural property by terrorist groups and organized crime”. It was chaired by the Ambassador H.E. Dina Kawar (Jordan) and Ambassador H.E. Inigo Lambertini (DPR of Italy) with the participation of other permanent representatives of member states, Ms. Emily Rafferty, Former director of Metropolitan Museum, as well as representatives of UNESCO, INTERPOL, UNODC, Antiquities Coalition and others.

Participants deliberated on where are the real final destination countries, what could be done to address this problem, what were the risk and the consequences of inaction. In this context, the discussions emphasized the need to address the critical issues at the “Final Destination Countries” and some participants highlighted the importance of due diligence, careful search of provenance, border controls, training and awareness raising, the criminalization of specific harmful conduct or the establishment of administrative offences, international cooperation in response to crime, intelligence sharing, implementation of existing legal frameworks, cooperation of stakeholders, and the importance of implementing the current obligations on countering terrorist financing.

Concrete recommendations were made targeting different stakeholders such as destination countries’ governments, museums, auction houses, international art market dealers, tour operators, companies specialized in the transport of antiquities, judges, magistrates, prosecutors, asset managers, bankers and investment advisors.

The initiative “Protecting Cultural Heritage –an Imperative for Humanity: Acting together against the destruction and trafficking of cultural property by terrorist groups and organized crime” was launched last September and focuses on addressing the potential ways to act together against the destruction and trafficking of cultural property by terrorists and organized crime groups in all affected countries.

