



22 December 2015

The Honorable Jacob Lew
Secretary of the Treasury
United States Department of the Treasury
Washington, DC

Dear Secretary Lew,

Our organizations commend your chairmanship of last week's historic meeting at the United Nations Security Council, where top finance ministers joined together from around the world to cut off funding to ISIL and Al-Qaida. We congratulate you on the unanimous adoption of December 17's binding resolution, which calls upon member states to monitor and control the flow of money to individuals and groups who might engage in terrorism, including a financial stream of increasing importance: the illicit trade in antiquities from Iraq and Syria. This resolution is a critical step forward in the fight to cut off a key source of income for ISIL — and to save our past for future generations.

We hope that the United States will continue this leadership role by now closing our borders to conflict antiquities from Iraq and Syria. In February 2015, the Security Council passed Resolution 2199 calling on all members "to prevent the trade in Iraqi and Syrian cultural property," warning that it was funding ISIL, the Al-Nusrah Front, and Al-Qaida affiliates. States had 120 days to comply with this binding and unanimous resolution. Yet almost one year later, the U.S. Congress has still not passed implementing legislation for Resolution 2199 with respect to Syria, despite alerts from the Federal Bureau of Investigation that ISIL-looted *are* reaching the American market.

In the absence of Congressional action, and in the interests of our national security, we call upon the Administration to comply with Resolution 2199 through Executive Order, by prohibiting the importation into the United States of antiquities of Syrian origin. In Executive Order 13582, the President has already prohibited "the importation into the United States of petroleum or petroleum products of Syrian origin," and authorized the Secretary of the Treasury to "take such actions... as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this order." This was accomplished under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*), the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1601 *et seq.*), and section 301 of title 3, United States Code.

Given this precedent, and using these existing laws for disrupting the financial support networks of terrorists organizations, we urge the United States to extend the petroleum restrictions to Syrian antiquities (building on those we already have in place for Iraq). As you have so rightly pointed out at the United Nations, conflicts antiquities *are* being used to fund ISIL and other

violent extremists. The United States, one of the largest art markets in the world, must not inadvertently contribute to this violent trade.

We must use all the counterterrorism tools at our disposal to fight ISIL's newer financing methods. We ask for your quick and decisive action. And thank you for your leadership on this critical issue of both cultural preservation and global security.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Deborah Lehr". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Deborah Lehr
Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tess Davis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tess Davis
Executive Director