



**STATEMENT OF THE ANTIQUITIES COALITION  
IN SUPPORT OF EGYPT'S REQUESTS FOR EMERGENCY IMPORT RESTRICTIONS  
AND A BILATERAL AGREEMENT**

May 14, 2014

1. My name is Deborah M. Lehr. I am submitting this Statement on behalf of The Antiquities Coalition ("Coalition") in support of Egypt's requests for emergency implementation of import restrictions and a bilateral Memorandum of Understanding pursuant to the Convention on the Cultural Property Implementation Act, 19 U.S.C. 2601 *et seq.* (CPIA). In addition to being a founder and the Chair of the Antiquities Coalition, I am also co-founder and Chairman of the Capitol Archaeological Institute at the George Washington University, a member of the Board of the Archaeological Institute of America, a member of the International Advisory Board of the National Geographic, and a Senior Fellow at the Paulson Institute, located at the University of Chicago.
2. The Coalition unites professionals from diverse backgrounds joined in the fight against the global problem of cultural racketeering. Our history dates back to the Egyptian Revolution of January 2011, when major archaeological sites, museums, storerooms and religious sites were being robbed and pillaged.
3. In 2011, the Coalition launched an initiative called the International Coalition to Protect Egyptian Antiquities (ICPEA), made up of a diverse group of archaeologists, technology experts, former government officials and diplomats, writers and scholars united around their common interest in protecting cultural heritage. ICPEA is led by The Capitol Archaeological Institute at The George Washington University, and includes the Archaeological Institute of America, the American Schools of Oriental Research, and others.
4. In May 2011, the Egyptian government invited ICPEA to visit Egypt to discuss ways to best support Egyptian efforts to stop the looting and theft. As a result of these discussions, the ICPEA and the Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities developed a public-private partnership covering three main categories – training, education, and social entrepreneurship.
5. The Government of Egypt and ICPEA also agreed upon a series of short, medium, and long-term programs to strike at the core of cultural racketeering. These initiatives include:
  - ✓ Cultural Heritage Inventories: conducting the first nationwide inventory for all excavated antiquities- led by Egyptian archeologists and the Ministry of Antiquities

- ✓ Physical Site Protection: training officials at the sites and supporting programs to better protect sites physically where necessary.
  - ✓ Ancient Records Digitization: scanning ancient records to protect the objects and ensure accessibility on the Internet.
  - ✓ Aerial Mapping: conducting nationwide mapping of all key archeological sites to serve as a benchmark for tracking looting and urban encroachment.
  - ✓ Cultural Heritage Education Campaigns: designing and implementing cultural heritage education programs around major archaeological sites.
  - ✓ Small Business Initiatives: in partnership with Goldman, Sachs & Co.'s 10,000 Women Program and the Egyptian Government, promoting the development of small businesses around tourist sites to create economic incentive for their protection.
6. The Coalition and ICPEA strongly support Egypt's requests for emergency measures and a bilateral agreement under the CPIA. We believe that such protections will provide valuable assistance in Egypt's fight against cultural racketeering.

### **CPIA's Determinations**

7. I understand that the CPIA requires a requesting nation to present evidence in support of four Determinations:
- (1) that the cultural patrimony of the requesting nation is in jeopardy from the pillage of archaeological materials;
  - (2) that the requesting nation has taken measures to protect its cultural patrimony;
  - (3) that U.S. import restrictions, either alone or in concert with actions taken by other market nations, would be of substantial benefit in deterring a serious situation of pillage, and
  - (4) that import restrictions are consistent with the general interest of the international community in the interchange of cultural property among nations for scientific, cultural, and educational purposes.

### **CPIA Section 303.**

8. There is overwhelming evidence that the cultural patrimony of Egypt is in jeopardy (Determination 1); no one who has watched any news coming out of Egypt since January 2011 can doubt it. Also, eminently qualified Egyptologists who have personally witnessed the looting and destruction, such as Dr. Robert Littman, Dr. Monica Hanna and Dr. Sarah Parcak will submit statements and evidence to the Committee in support of Determination 1.
9. With respect to Determination 3, deterring pillage is a major goal of the ICPEA's agreement with Egypt. In addition, I understand that Egypt will be discussing its view that the U.S. a major target market for looted antiquities; the U.S. agreeing to impose import restrictions will reduce the illegal trade. On this note, we have cooperated closely with the Egyptian Embassy in the United States to identify looted items being

sold through auction houses and on line. There has been an increase of Egyptian antiquities available for sale in the past three years. The Egyptian Embassy has taken an active role in seeking out these auction houses and on-line businesses, especially Ebay and Christies, and working with them to explore ways to ensure that any item sold through their businesses have the proper documentation. The Embassy has also help to raise awareness of the looted antiquities from Egypt appearing in the U.S. market through convening experts to discuss the issues, hosting programs about the looting of antiquities at the Embassy and the Ambassador's residence, actively soliciting support from the foreign policy and government community, and coordinating with others in the diplomatic community facing similar challenges. The Antiquities Coalition has partnered with the Embassy in hosting a number of these activities.

10. Egypt's witnesses will speak at the hearing to Determination 4: that with import restrictions, Egypt will be encouraged to continue its long tradition of loaning its invaluable collections to locations around the world for scientific, cultural, and educational purposes, and of inviting international archaeologists and Egyptologists to learn and study its incomparable objects, sites and museums.
11. Accordingly, I direct the remainder of my comments to Determination 2.

### **Determination 2: Egypt has Taken Steps to Protect its Cultural Patrimony**

12. Egypt has reached out for assistance prior to requesting emergency import restrictions and a bilateral agreement under the CPIA.
13. In 2013, Egypt entered a Memorandum of Understanding with India on Cooperation in the Field of Protection, Preservation and Management of Cultural Heritage (<http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/bilateral/indiaegypt.aspx>).
14. In March 2013, Egypt's State Minister of Antiquities signed a memorandum of understanding with President of Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation Hermann Parzinger in Germany (<http://allafrica.com/stories/201303011415.html>).
15. As noted above, Egypt also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with ICPEA, to be led by the Antiquities Coalition, on March 10, 2014. The purpose of the ICPEA MOU is for the signatories "to work together to protect Egyptian antiquities."
16. The MOU lists several initiatives to be undertaken jointly by the Egypt Government and the ICPEA in order to stem the tide of illegal looting and exports, encourage the cooperation of foreign nations to combat cultural racketeering, track and protect valuable sites and facilities, and develop and education and awareness campaign on protecting Egyptian heritage.

### **Conclusion**

17. The Antiquities Coalition and ICPEA have been working since the January 2011 Revolution – and in close partnership with the Egyptian government over the past several months – to combat cultural racketeering, looting, theft and destruction of Egypt’s cultural heritage and patrimony. We hope the State Department will support those important efforts by granting Egypt’s requests for import restrictions under the CPIA.

Thank you.

Deborah M. Lehr

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Chairman, The Antiquities Coalition