

# First Aid to Cultural Heritage in Times of Conflict

Rome, 17 September – 29 October 2010

## Course Information Document

### Background

In the past decades, armed conflicts worldwide have involved deliberate or accidental damage to cultural heritage. Cultural heritage is often used to sharpen existing cultural divides, but it plays a crucial role in helping communities recover from such situations.

In times of conflict, existing protection mechanisms tend to fail because governments are weakened and the core values that hold communities together are progressively eroded. Operations not included under the umbrella of humanitarian aid can be delayed significantly due to restricted access by the military, and by security or law enforcement agencies. On the ground, a complex web of networks is put into place in different stages. Few cultural heritage professionals are adequately equipped to navigate within this context. If they are called to intervene, they should understand how to work alongside ongoing humanitarian efforts and other recovery operations – especially when culture may not be seen as an immediate priority.

### The course

This course will bring together a group of cultural heritage workers from different backgrounds, both cultural and professional. Some have experienced conflict first hand; others are working to provide assistance to these countries. Everyone, however, is committed in some way to improve the protection of cultural heritage in all its shapes and forms when it is under threat.

Our course will enable participants to acquire the basic skills and strategies for developing an appropriate preliminary response to prevent further damage to cultural heritage in the event of conflict, regardless of whether destruction was accidental or intentional. Together, we will explore how cultural heritage protection and recovery can play an important role in overcoming sense of loss and displacement.

Through practical exercises, group activities and shared life experiences over a 6-week stay together in Rome, the participants will enter upon a journey from which they will emerge with a sense of what they can do in their own context – whether this be through hands-on actions, training activities, public advocacy or policy advising. Everyone has a role to play. This course aims to inspire 22 people to make a difference.

## Objective

After six weeks, course participants will be able to:

- assess the values associated with cultural heritage and the impact that conflict has on them;
- apply ethics and principles of conservation in extreme conditions;
- assess and manage risks to cultural heritage;
- apply basic techniques to salvage and stabilize a range of cultural materials, buildings and sites;
- identify appropriate international legal instruments protecting cultural heritage;
- communicate successfully with various actors on the ground, and work in teams;
- take peacetime preparatory action to improve response.

This will be demonstrated through various discussions and practical exercises, completed according to criteria provided by the teaching team.

## Course Participants

The group is composed of mid-career professionals who are actively involved in the protection of cultural heritage. They work in national heritage bodies (departments of antiquities; ministries of cultural heritage, tourism, or education; commissions for monuments and museums); for non-governmental organizations (NGOs); national museums, archaeological sites; archives; performance arts centres; national conservation institutes; universities; national army.

## Course team

The course team is composed of professionals from ICCROM, UNESCO, the Blue Shield Network, Nationaal Archief – Netherlands, the Superior Institute for Conservation and Restoration – Italy, the Blue Shield Network, Centre for Safety and Development, INTERSOS, various NGOs, and other international guest experts.

## Working language

Most participants and course team members are not native English speakers. However, the working language of the course is English. The course team will be available at all times to help in overcoming language barriers during lectures, practical activities, group discussions and study visits.

## Course structure

This course exposes participants to various techniques, tools and mechanisms to improve the effectiveness of the response to endangered cultural heritage in times of conflict. The course interweaves theory, practice and discussion to create a growing momentum culminating in a final group exercise. The teaching team has taken care to cross-reference their sessions with other teachers to revisit previously acquired knowledge and ensure an integrated experience.

Overall, the course is structured into 3 key themes. Each key theme includes a number of topics (see below).

### ***Key theme 1: CULTURE AND CONFLICT***

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- Topic 1 – Experiences and perceptions of conflict and cultural heritage
- Topic 2 – International legislation for cultural heritage in times of conflict
- Topic 3 – Humanitarian aid mechanisms and culture: ICRC, ANCBS
- Topic 4 – Other actors for cultural heritage protection: Swiss Civil Protection, Italian Carabinieri
- Topic 5 – Patterns of conflict and impact on cultural heritage
- Topic 6 – The military: the main actor
- Topic 7 – Ethics and principles of conservation in times of conflict
- Topic 8 – When culture is a target: diplomacy and negotiation for cultural heritage
- Topic 9 – Cultural heritage and post-war recovery
- Topic 10 – Normative action (standard-setting tools and their limits)

### ***Key theme 2: COMMUNICATION, LOGISTICS AND PLANNING***

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- Topic 1: Communication skills in times of conflict
- Topic 2: Risk management
- Topic 3: Personal safety
- Topic 4: Planning, logistics and resource management
- Topic 5: Disaster planning
- Topic 6: Emergency response

### ***Key theme 3: MATERIAL CHARACTERIZATION & FIRST AID INTERVENTIONS***

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- Topic 1: Documentation
- Topic 2: Packing, handling and unpacking
- Topic 3: Storage
- Topic 4: Agents of deterioration
- Topic 5: Buildings, monuments and archaeological sites: structural assessments, immediate repairs, in situ stabilization
- Topic 6: Ceramics and glass
- Topic 7: Wood, bone and ivory
- Topic 8: Textiles and leather
- Topic 9: Movable paintings
- Topic 10: Stones
- Topic 11: Wall Paintings
- Topic 12: Paper, photographs, archives and libraries
- Topic 13: Metals

## **Course schedule**

The course runs every day (Monday to Friday) from 9:30 to 17:30. On most Saturdays, special visits and study tours have been organized. Proposed visits are: historic Trastevere, Roman forum, Abbey of Montecassino, Florence (see attached Draft course schedule).

Each day is divided into 4 x 90-minute sessions (2 morning, 2 afternoon). There are also 2 x 30 minutes breaks for coffee/tea (2 morning, 2 afternoon), and a 1-hour lunch break from 13:00 to 14:00.

Every morning, individual study time is allocated between 8:30 and 9:30 a.m. – except for the days when the course starts at 9:00 sharp. A few other sessions will be reserved for individual study throughout the course,

Starting Week 2, special 30-minute sessions will take place on Mondays (starting at 9:00). Volunteer participants will prepare and give a presentation of what was covered the week before.

## **Course evaluations**

As for all ICCROM courses, a formal course evaluation system is in place. It will address course content and approach, as well as the learning environment. It will involve the participants and their institutions, the course team, as well as the course partners. It will follow impacts and outcomes well after the end of the event. The opinion of everyone matters. Details on the evaluation process will be explained in the introduction to the course.

## **Final on course participation**

ICCROM courses are unique opportunities for exchange, learning and networking. The experience of participants plays a fundamental role in the content of the course itself. Dealing with cultural heritage and conflict is a delicate matter. Both participants and course team must keep in mind that conflicts are (at least) two-sided matters. At all times during the course, we should remember that we could have been on the other side. This will be one of our shared challenges throughout the course.