

Intervention of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) at the High Level Meeting on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2199 and the Safeguarding of Iraqi and Syrian Heritage

Towards an effective implementation of Resolution 2199: best practices and proposals from partners

Dear Mr Chairman / Madam Chair,

I speak for IFLA, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, representing libraries and their users worldwide. One of IFLA's core missions is the protection and preservation of documentary cultural heritage.

The UN Security Council Resolution 2199 is a significant and important milestone towards a more unified and active approach to safeguard cultural heritage.

IFLA is a founding member of the Blue Shield, together with ICOM, ICOMOS and ICA. Through the Blue Shield IFLA engages actively with the issues at hand. The mission of the Blue Shield is closely related to IFLA's aim to safeguard documentary heritage collections and together with the other main Blue Shield organisations IFLA raises awareness in countries affected by conflict.

Furthermore, the *IFLA Principles of Engagement in library-related activities in times of conflict, crisis or disaster* outline IFLA's position and what actions can be taken when confronted with a disaster. The IFLA Cultural Heritage Programme links its results, such as the Risk Register for Documentary Heritage Collections, directly into the work of UNESCO and the Blue Shield.

For this we work closely not only with the UNESCO Culture Sector but also with the Memory of the World programme, a programme which in light of the current situation is even more significant.

The civil war in Syria over the last four years and the more recent escalation of threats in Iraq have led to more libraries being destroyed and documentary heritage collections being either destroyed, looted, trafficked or displaced. Information is very difficult to obtain as often our library contacts have had to leave the area or are very restricted on what information can be shared as they otherwise might not be able to guarantee their own safety. Human lives and the safeguarding of librarians and information professionals in the area is always the first priority for IFLA.

IFLA strongly supports the UNESCO action plans on both Syria and Iraq and will engage and further UNESCO's mission and implementation of these as much as possible. We also support any initiatives to implement the UN Resolution 2199 by UNESCO.