



Cultural Heritage & Museums News Heritage Museums

34 Lebanese cultural properties under enhanced protection by UNESCO

Failure to comply with the clauses that provide the highest level of protection for UNESCO monuments could be a basis for possible prosecution.

The archaeological sites of Baalbek, Anjar and Tyre, as well as the Beirut Archaeological Museum and the Eshmun sanctuary, are among the 34 sites in Lebanon that [UNESCO](#) has placed under enhanced protection.

The decision was taken at the organisation's headquarters in Paris during an extraordinary meeting of the Committee for the Protection of Cultural Heritage in the Event of Armed Conflict. The 34 Lebanese cultural properties on the list will benefit from the highest level of protection against attack. According to Unesco, non-compliance with these clauses would constitute a serious violation of the 1954 Hague Convention and a possible basis for prosecution.

According to Audrey Azoulay, director-general of Unesco, the organisation “has a deep and long-standing cooperation with Lebanon. We will spare no effort to provide all the expertise and assistance needed to protect its exceptional heritage”.

Since the outbreak of hostilities, UNESCO has been in close contact with site managers, cultural professionals and national authorities. The organization has offered its support in identifying emergency measures, inventorying museum collections, and moving works that can be moved to safe locations elsewhere in Lebanon.

UNESCO is also carrying out satellite monitoring of historical and heritage sites, in order to assess their state of conservation and any damage they have incurred, in partnership with UNOSAT, the United Nations Satellite Centre.

The sites placed under enhanced protection will receive technical and financial assistance from UNESCO to reinforce their legal protections, improve risk anticipation and management measures, and provide further training for site managers in this area. Enhanced protection also helps send a signal to the entire international community of the urgent need to protect these sites.

This emergency initiative falls within the framework of the 1954 UNESCO Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property and its Second Protocol drawn up in 1999. It complements the actions

already undertaken by UNESCO in recent weeks to protect Lebanon's cultural heritage.

UNESCO has also set up an emergency programme for Lebanon covering the culture, education, information and communication sectors. The Organization is calling on its Member States to support the implementation of this programme with financial contributions.

A few days earlier, the NGOs Heritage for Peace and Heritage Education Program published a [comprehensive study](#) documenting Lebanese monuments that have already been damaged by hostilities or are under serious threat.

Find the list of protected monuments [here](#)

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Photo: Vyacheslav Argenberg

Photo [source](#)