



# JNAMUN 2026

**UNITED NATIONS  
EDUCATIONAL SCIENTIFIC  
AND CULTURAL  
ORGANIZATION**  
*UNESCO*

**AGENDA ITEM:**

**Protecting historical artefacts and  
stopping the spread of false  
information about history**

USG: Karan Aydın

Chair: Ece Bilge Cerik

Co-Chair: Mina Altay

Rapporteur: Elif Yula Kanat



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## Letter from the Secretary General

*Most honourable participants of Junior Nesibe Aydın Model United Nations 2026 (JNAMUN'26),*

*It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to JNAMUN'26, which is organized by the hardworking and talented middle school students of Nesibe Aydın Gölbaşı Campus. I extend my sincere thanks to our academic team, who have researched every detail with great care to ensure that you enjoy such a prestigious and diplomatic conference. I also offer my appreciation to our organisation team for planning activities that will allow you to build friendships and collaborate with fellow delegates while having an enjoyable and memorable experience.*

*As the JNAMUN'26 team, our mission is to support our delegates in every respect, to help you gain insight into diplomacy, to develop your public speaking abilities, and to strengthen your language skills. Another valued aspect of attending JNAMUN'26 is the opportunity to form lasting friendships and create memories that will stay with you. Both our academic and organisation teams have worked with dedication to offer you the most enriching Model United Nations experience possible.*

*This year in JNAMUN'26 we are hosting nine committees which are **UNHCR** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), **FAO** (Food and Agriculture Organization), **WHO** (World Health Organization), **UNESCO** (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), **CSW** (The Commission on the Status of Women), **UNICEF** (The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund), **DISEC** (Disarmament & International Security Committee), **ECOSOC** (Economic and Social Council), and **SPECPOL** (Special Political and Decolonization Committee). The agenda items for each committee have been selected in line with the policies of their respective United Nations bodies.*

*We wish you an exceptional Junior Nesibe Aydın Model United Nations experience. As the JNAMUN'26 team, we look forward to meeting you and supporting you as you achieve your goals to the very best of your ability.*

*Best of luck,*

**Mustafa COŞKUN**

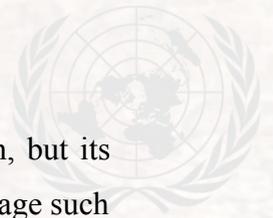
**Secretary General of JNAMUN'26**



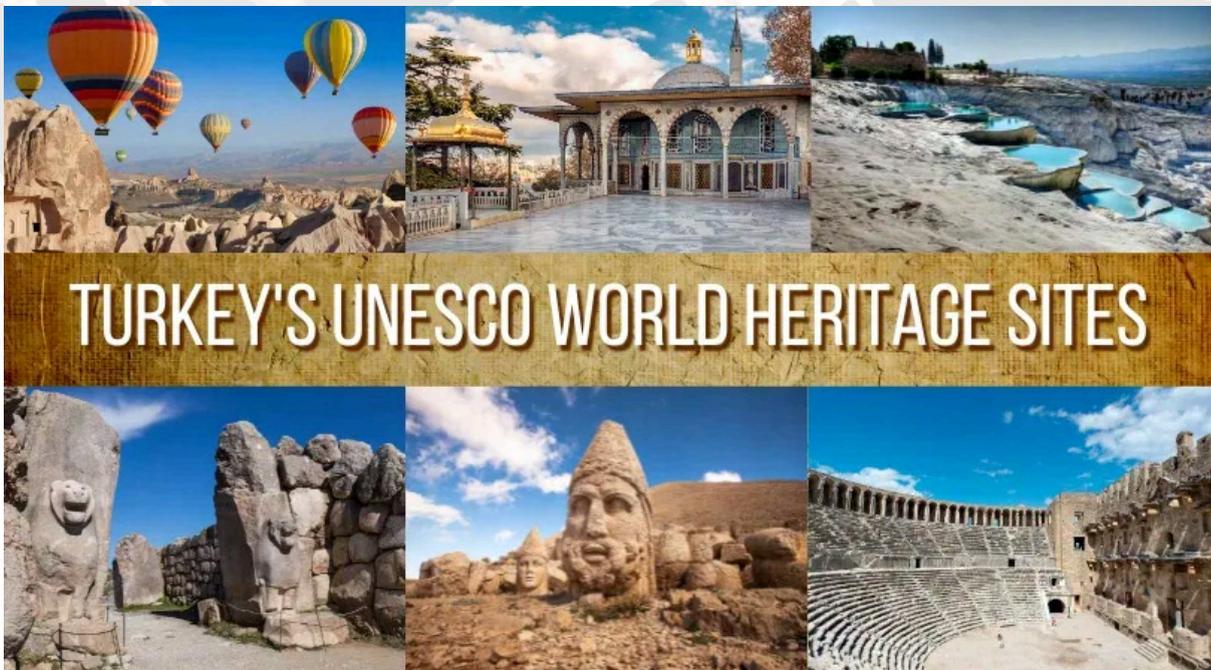
## 1. Introduction to the Committee

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is the UN's specialized agency that works to build peace through cooperation in education, science, culture, and communication. Its core idea is that lasting stability depends not only on politics and security, but on how societies protect knowledge, cultural identity, shared heritage, and access to trustworthy information. UNESCO supports Member States by setting international standards, coordinating global agreements, providing technical expertise, building capacity, and mobilizing international cooperation when heritage, education systems, or information ecosystems are under threat.





In culture and heritage, UNESCO is best known for the World Heritage system, but its mandate is broader than famous monuments. It includes safeguarding movable heritage such as museum collections and archives, protecting underwater cultural heritage, supporting the preservation of languages and intangible practices, and improving how heritage is documented, conserved, and shared. UNESCO helps governments strengthen laws, train conservators and customs officials, improve museum and archive standards, and coordinate responses to emergencies such as conflict, looting, fires, floods, and earthquakes. It also works with partners like INTERPOL, the World Customs Organization, and national heritage authorities to reduce illicit trafficking of cultural property, which often funds organized crime and armed groups while permanently damaging historical record.



In communication and information, UNESCO's role is to strengthen access to knowledge and promote information integrity. That includes supporting media and information literacy, ethical standards for communication, freedom of expression, and capacity building so societies can resist misinformation and disinformation. In practice, UNESCO develops guidance, research, and educational tools that help governments, schools, and civil society improve how people evaluate sources, understand historical evidence, and recognize manipulation. This matters because false historical narratives are not only academic errors; they can inflame nationalism, justify discrimination, deny atrocities, and fuel conflict.



UNESCO’s mandate connects strongly to the 2030 Agenda, especially SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), which includes a target to strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage. It also links to SDG 4 (Quality Education) through education on critical thinking and historical understanding, and to SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) through information integrity and social cohesion. In this committee, we will focus on “Protecting historical artefacts and stopping the spread of false information about history (SDG 11)” by designing policies that strengthen heritage protection, reduce trafficking and destruction, improve conservation and digitization, and build resilient information ecosystems where historical claims are tested against evidence rather than amplified for political or commercial gain.





## 2. Introduction to the Agenda Item

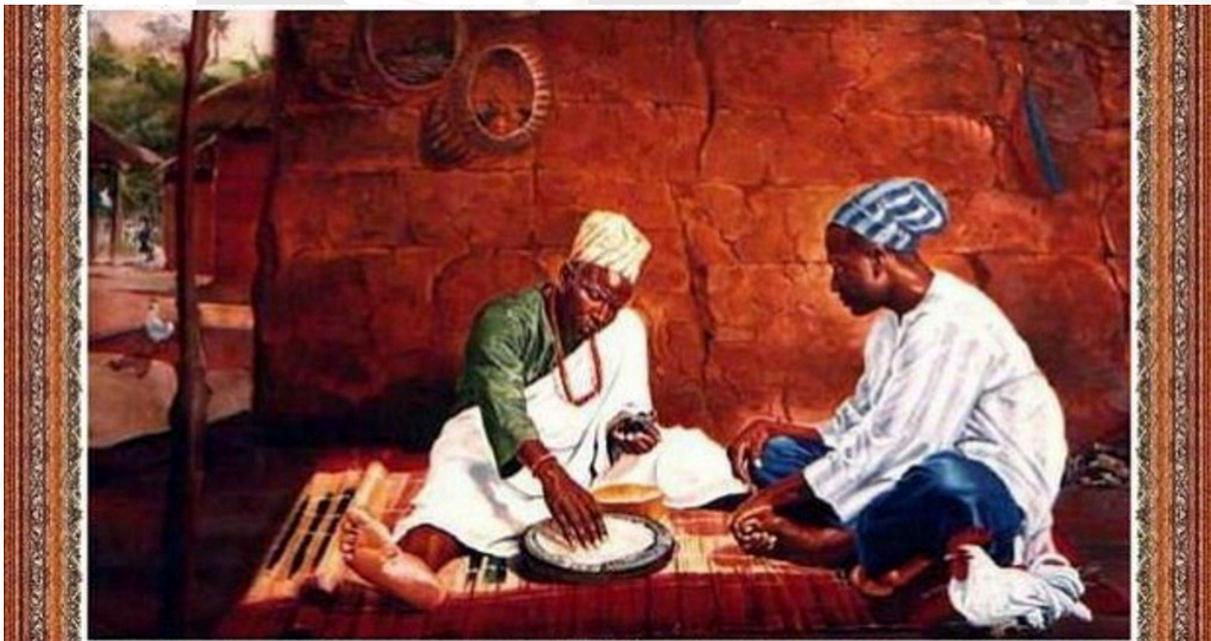
“Protecting historical artefacts and stopping the spread of false information about history (SDG 11)” focuses on defending the physical evidence of the past while also defending the public’s ability to understand the past accurately. Historical artefacts, archives, monuments, and archaeological sites are not decorative objects. They are primary sources that allow societies to study identity, migration, trade, conflict, science, religion, and everyday life across centuries. When artefacts are looted, destroyed, forged, or removed from context, the loss is permanent: history becomes easier to rewrite because the evidence is gone or contaminated.





Protecting artefacts requires treating heritage as infrastructure that needs security, conservation, and crisis planning. Key threats include armed conflict and deliberate cultural cleansing, illicit excavation and trafficking, weak museum and archive storage conditions, underfunded conservation capacity, corruption in art markets, and natural hazards such as earthquakes, floods, fires, and climate driven humidity and temperature shifts. Effective protection includes strong national heritage laws, inventories and documentation, trained conservators, secure storage, site management plans, community guardianship, and rapid response mechanisms for emergencies. Digitization and open cataloging can reduce loss by preserving records and making stolen items easier to identify, but they also introduce new risks such as data misuse and sophisticated forgery.

Stopping false information about history is the information side of the same problem. Misinformation and disinformation can spread through social media, politicized education, sensational media, and even commercial tourism narratives. False history is often designed to achieve present day goals: justify territorial claims, erase minorities, deny atrocities, recruit extremists, or monetize attention. It can be subtle, such as selectively quoting sources, using misleading maps, or presenting disputed interpretations as settled facts. It can also be industrial, using coordinated networks, bots, and algorithmic amplification to make a narrative feel “popular,” which many audiences mistake for “true.”





The strongest defense is an evidence-based public ecosystem: education that teaches source evaluation, institutions that publish transparent research and accessible public history, and platforms and media that reduce amplification of demonstrably false claims. This agenda therefore sits at the intersection of heritage protection, education, media and information literacy, and digital governance. Delegates will design policies that strengthen provenance standards and anti trafficking cooperation, improve conservation and disaster preparedness, expand digitization and documentation, and build societal resilience against historical manipulation by improving how schools, museums, media, and online platforms communicate evidence, uncertainty, and responsible interpretation.





### 3. Keywords & Definitions

#### 1. **Cultural Heritage**

The physical and non physical legacy of the past, including monuments, sites, artefacts, archives, traditions, and knowledge that communities value and transmit.

#### 2. **Cultural Property**

Movable items of historical, artistic, or archaeological importance, such as sculptures, manuscripts, coins, and museum objects, often protected by national and international law.

#### 3. **Artefact**

A human made object from the past that provides evidence about history, culture, and technology, especially when its origin and context are documented.

#### 4. **Archaeological Site**

A location containing material remains of past human activity. Its value often comes from context, not just objects removed from the ground.

#### 5. **Provenance**

The documented ownership history and origin of an object, including where it was found, how it moved, and whether its transfer was legal.

#### 6. **Context**

The physical and historical setting of an artefact or site. Losing context through looting destroys information even if the object survives.

#### 7. **Illicit Excavation**

Unauthorized digging and removal of archaeological material, usually for profit, which damages sites and removes objects without records.

#### 8. **Illicit Trafficking**

Illegal trade and transport of cultural property across borders, often enabled by forged documents, corrupt networks, and weak enforcement.

#### 9. **Repatriation**

Returning cultural property to its country or community of origin, often after it was removed through illegal export, colonial extraction, or conflict looting.

#### 10. **Restitution**

A broader concept than repatriation, involving repair of wrongful taking, which can include return, compensation, shared custody, or long term loans.



## 11. **World Heritage**

Sites recognized under the UNESCO World Heritage Convention as having outstanding universal value and requiring protection for humanity as a whole.

## 12. **Outstanding Universal Value (OUV)**

The specific reason a World Heritage property is considered globally significant, defined through criteria and integrity and authenticity requirements.

## 13. **Authenticity**

Whether a heritage object or site is genuine in materials, design, workmanship, and setting, not a modern imitation presented as original.

## 14. **Integrity**

Whether a heritage site includes all elements needed to express its value and is not severely damaged or fragmented.

## 15. **Conservation**

Actions that prevent deterioration and preserve heritage for the future, including climate control, stabilization, restoration, and proper storage.

## 16. **Restoration**

Interventions to repair or return an object or structure to a known earlier state. Poor restoration can falsify history by adding invented features.

## 17. **Preventive Conservation**

Reducing damage risks through environment control, handling rules, pest management, disaster planning, and security, instead of repairing after loss.

## 18. **Inventory and Cataloging**

Systematic documentation of collections and sites, including photos, measurements, and descriptions, used for management, theft prevention, and recovery.

## 19. **Digitization**

Creating digital records of heritage objects and archives through scanning, photography, or 3D capture to preserve information and widen access.

## 20. **3D Documentation**

High precision digital capture of objects or sites to support research, monitoring, restoration planning, and education, especially after damage.

## 21. **Forgery**

A deliberately fake object or altered item presented as authentic, often to deceive buyers or support a false historical narrative.



## 22. **Fake Provenance**

Fabricated documentation designed to make an illicit or forged object appear legal and authentic.

## 23. **Due Diligence**

The required checks by buyers, museums, auction houses, and dealers to verify provenance, legal export, and authenticity before acquisition.

## 24. **Art Market**

The network of dealers, collectors, galleries, and auction houses where cultural property is bought and sold. Weak regulation can enable trafficking.

## 25. **Customs Control**

Border enforcement measures that inspect, seize, and investigate cultural property shipments, often requiring trained specialists and databases.

## 26. **Conflict Looting**

Theft and trafficking of cultural property during war or instability, sometimes used to finance armed groups and organized crime.

## 27. **Emergency Heritage Protection**

Rapid actions to secure sites and collections during disasters or conflict, including evacuation, temporary storage, and risk mapping.

## 28. **Misinformation**

False or misleading information shared without intent to deceive, often spread through misunderstanding, poor sourcing, or careless repetition.

## 29. **Disinformation**

False or misleading information spread intentionally to manipulate beliefs, political outcomes, or social tensions.

## 30. **Historical Revisionism**

Reinterpreting the past using new evidence or methods. Legitimate revisionism differs from denialism because it is evidence based and transparent.

## 31. **Denialism**

Rejecting well supported historical facts, often atrocities, despite overwhelming evidence, usually for political or ideological reasons.

## 32. **Historical Myth**

A widely believed story about the past that is exaggerated, simplified, or false, often used to build identity narratives.



### **33. Primary Source**

Direct evidence from the time being studied, such as documents, photographs, inscriptions, objects, or official records.

### **34. Secondary Source**

Later interpretation or analysis of primary sources, such as textbooks, academic papers, documentaries, and museum labels.

### **35. Media and Information Literacy**

Skills to evaluate sources, detect manipulation, understand evidence, and make responsible judgments about information quality.

### **36. Algorithmic Amplification**

When platform algorithms boost certain content based on engagement, potentially spreading sensational false history faster than careful evidence.

### **37. Deepfakes and Synthetic Media**

AI generated or altered images, audio, or video that can fabricate historical “evidence” and confuse audiences about what is authentic.



## 4. Historical Background

After World War II, the international community linked peace to education, culture, and reliable knowledge, not only to diplomacy. UNESCO's Constitution was adopted in London in November 1945 and entered into force in November 1946, framing UNESCO's mission around building peace through "moral and intellectual solidarity," which includes protecting cultural heritage and supporting access to knowledge.



In the early Cold War period, large scale destruction during conflicts pushed states to formalize heritage protection in law. A major milestone was the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, adopted under UNESCO's auspices as the first comprehensive multilateral treaty focused specifically on safeguarding cultural property during war. This created a baseline expectation that heritage sites and collections are not legitimate targets and that states must prepare protection measures in peacetime as well.

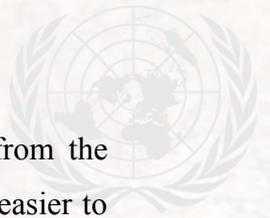


From the late 1960s into the 1970s, another threat became impossible to ignore: systematic looting and cross border trafficking of artefacts, often fed by demand in the international art market. UNESCO responded with the 1970 Convention on prohibiting and preventing the illicit import, export, and transfer of ownership of cultural property, emphasizing prevention tools such as inventories and export certificates, plus international cooperation on seizure and return. Soon after, UNESCO also anchored heritage protection in a global recognition system through the 1972 World Heritage Convention, linking protection to international responsibility and long term management standards for sites of outstanding value.



In the 1990s and 2000s, the concept of “evidence of the past” broadened beyond monuments to include fragile documentary records and non monumental heritage. UNESCO’s Memory of the World programme focused attention on archives, manuscripts, maps, and other documentary heritage, highlighting how loss, decay, censorship, and poor preservation can erase history even without bombs or looters. In parallel, UNESCO adopted additional legal instruments to cover heritage that is easily exploited or overlooked, including the 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage and the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, reinforcing the idea that history is stored in objects, places, records, and living practices.

In the 2010s, deliberate cultural destruction and industrial scale trafficking during conflicts pushed heritage from a cultural issue into a security and organized crime issue. The UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2347 in March 2017, recognizing that destroying and trafficking cultural heritage can fuel conflict and terrorism financing and calling for stronger protection and cooperation. This helped normalize the idea that safeguarding artefacts is tied to international peace and security, not only to national pride or tourism.



Over the last decade, the information side of the agenda became inseparable from the physical side. As communication moved online, false historical narratives became easier to produce, target, and amplify, sometimes to justify present day political goals, inflame hatred, or deny documented atrocities. UNESCO expanded work on media and information literacy to strengthen people’s ability to evaluate sources and resist disinformation, and it launched guidance on governance of digital platforms focused on transparency and accountability in content curation and moderation. UNESCO also produced a global standard on AI ethics in 2021, relevant because synthetic media and deepfakes can fabricate “historical evidence,” and it has issued education guidance to counter denial and distortion in high risk areas such as Holocaust history.

This history matters for your agenda because it shows a clear convergence: protecting artefacts and protecting historical truth are now one problem with two fronts. If objects and archives are stolen or destroyed, the evidentiary base shrinks. If false narratives dominate schools, media, or platforms, the remaining evidence is ignored or twisted. UNESCO sits at that intersection, using conventions, standards, capacity building, and education tools to help states secure heritage and strengthen public resilience against manipulation of history.

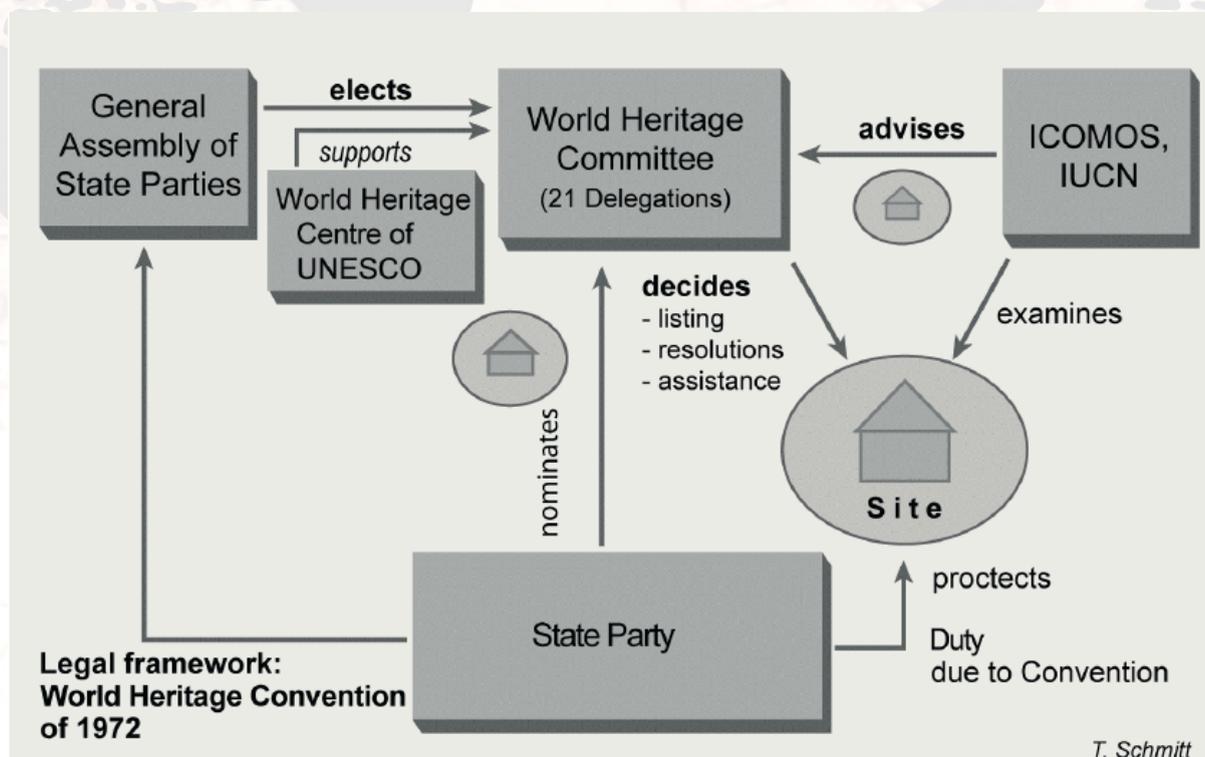




## 5. Examples of the Topic

Countries and institutions use different approaches to protect artefacts and defend historical truth, combining law enforcement, museum standards, emergency conservation, digitization, and education that builds source checking skills.

In Italy, the Carabinieri Command for the Protection of Cultural Heritage is a specialized police unit focused on art theft, looting, and trafficking. The lesson is that heritage crime drops when enforcement is professionalized with dedicated investigators, databases, and cross border cooperation, not treated as a side task for general police.



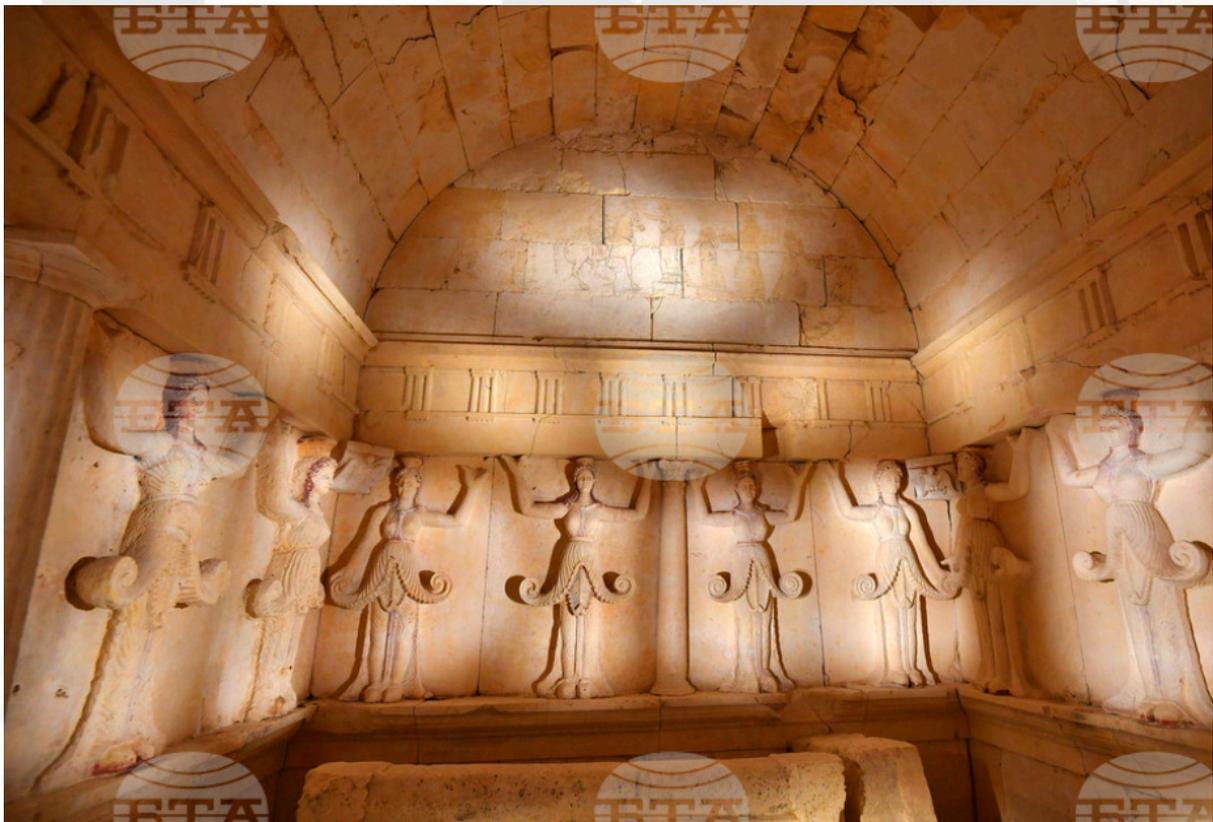
Through ICOM Red Lists, customs officers and police are given practical guides showing categories of objects most at risk from specific countries and regions. The lesson is that border enforcement improves when officials can rapidly recognize what “high risk” looks like in the real world, even if they are not archaeologists.



In Mali, during the 2012–2013 crisis, many Timbuktu manuscripts were evacuated and hidden by local families and librarians, then conservation work followed to address damage. The lesson is that community guardianship and local networks can outperform formal systems during conflict, but only if there are pre planned relationships, trusted leadership, and safe storage options.

In Iraq, UNESCO’s restoration work in Mosul after ISIS damage brought together stabilizing structures, rebuilding key heritage sites, and training local craftspeople. The lesson is that recovery is not only reconstruction, it is skills transfer, documentation, and governance so heritage does not become a one time media project and then decay again.

In Cambodia, long term international cooperation has supported protection and conservation around Angkor, including site management, visitor controls, and training. The lesson is that protecting artefacts starts with protecting sites through management plans and sustainable tourism rules, because uncontrolled access and weak oversight create looting and damage incentives.





Many national museums and universities have expanded provenance research, auditing collections to identify gaps in ownership history and investigate items linked to conflict looting or illegal export. The lesson is that trafficking is enabled by weak acquisition standards, and that transparency and due diligence reduce the market for illicit objects.

Digitization and 3D documentation programs have been used to record monuments, inscriptions, and objects so that evidence survives even if the original is damaged. The lesson is that digitization is not a replacement for protection, but it makes restoration more accurate, supports monitoring, and blocks fake narratives by preserving verifiable records.

Several countries have created “object passport” style documentation for museum collections, including standardized photos, measurements, condition reports, and secure inventory systems. The lesson is that theft prevention and recovery depend on boring administration, because you cannot recover what you cannot identify.

For false history online, media and information literacy programs in schools and libraries teach students to evaluate sources, recognize manipulation techniques, and distinguish primary evidence from commentary. The lesson is that countering historical misinformation scales better through skills training than through endless corrections of individual claims.

Museums and heritage institutions increasingly build “evidence transparency” into exhibitions by showing how historians know what they claim: excavation context, dating methods, material analysis, and competing interpretations when evidence is uncertain. The lesson is that public trust rises when institutions show their methods, because people become less vulnerable to confident sounding but source free narratives.



## **6. Questions to be Addressed**

- 1. How can states build national inventories and documentation for collections and archaeological sites so theft can be detected quickly and recovery becomes possible?**
- 2. How can customs and police be trained and equipped to identify high risk cultural property without turning border control into an impossible burden?**
- 3. Which legal tools most effectively reduce illicit excavation and trafficking: stronger penalties, licensing systems, market regulation, or targeted financial investigations?**
- 4. How can countries cooperate across borders on seizures and returns when legal systems and definitions of “legal ownership” differ?**
- 5. What emergency protection measures should be mandatory for museums and archives in conflict and disaster prone areas, including evacuation plans and secure storage?**
- 6. What policies reduce damage from mass tourism while still supporting local livelihoods that depend on heritage economies?**
- 7. How should governments prioritize conservation funding: iconic sites, at risk archives, community museums, or preventive conservation across many smaller collections?**
- 8. How can digitization and 3D documentation be scaled responsibly, including standards for accuracy, data security, and long term digital preservation?**
- 9. How can countries detect and disrupt forgery networks, including fake provenance documents and laundering of illicit objects through intermediaries?**
- 10. What role should private collectors play, and what regulations ensure transparency without driving the market further underground?**
- 11. How can education systems teach historical thinking, primary source analysis, and evidence evaluation without politicizing curricula?**
- 12. How should states respond to organized disinformation campaigns that distort history to justify hatred or violence, while protecting freedom of expression?**
- 13. What responsibilities should social media platforms have to reduce algorithmic amplification of demonstrably false historical claims?**
- 14. How can museums and historians communicate uncertainty honestly so the public understands debate versus denialism and propaganda?**
- 15. What approaches work best to counter denial of well documented atrocities, including public education, memorialization, and legal frameworks?**
- 16. How can local communities be empowered as heritage guardians so protection is not only top down and external?**



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