



2023 Counter-Terrorism Week SIDE EVENTS

19-23 JUNE 2023

UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS • NEW YORK



United Nations Security Council
Counter-Terrorism Committee
Executive Directorate (CTED)



Permanent Mission of Italy
UN - New York

Addressing the linkages between the destruction and illicit trafficking of cultural property and terrorism: scope of the threat and responses to the phenomenon

22 June 2023 – 13:15-14:30 EDT

Conference Room 11, United Nations Headquarters & WebEx (Hybrid format)

RSVP for online or in-person participation via [link below](#)

Follow live on UN WebTV through this [link](#)

Concept Note

Background

The Security Council has condemned on numerous occasions the wanton and unlawful destruction of cultural heritage in armed conflict, including when committed by terrorist groups. It has also elaborated upon the different ways in which terrorist groups may benefit from said destruction and the illicit trafficking of cultural property that may emerge from it.

In certain contexts, the destruction of cultural heritage, as well as the looting and smuggling of cultural property by terrorist groups, has been recognized as a clear attempt to deny historical roots and cultural diversity, which can fuel and exacerbate conflict and hamper post-conflict national reconciliation. As reaffirmed by resolution 2347 (2017), the deliberate and unlawful destruction of cultural heritage sites may constitute, pursuant to international law, a war crime, and its perpetrators must be brought to justice.

Across its resolutions, the Council has further underscored the way in which the looting and smuggling of cultural property can be exploited by terrorist groups as a means to generate revenue, support recruitment efforts and strengthen their organizational capacity. In this regard, the looting

and trafficking of cultural property has repeatedly been identified as a potential source of terrorism financing.

In responding to these threats, Member States have been called upon to, inter alia, enhance their law enforcement and judicial cooperation, and introduce effective national measures at operational and legislative levels, in accordance with their obligations and commitments under international law, to prevent and counter trafficking of cultural property and related offences. Whole-of-society approaches grounded upon increased public awareness and the involvement of civil society, cultural institutions and private sector, are critical in further advancing the effective prevention, detection, and comprehensive responses to the different dimensions of the phenomenon.

Nevertheless, while the linkages between terrorism and the destruction of cultural heritage and the trafficking in cultural property have gained international recognition, their exact scale and scope remain difficult to assess. Efforts to effectively detect, investigate and prosecute the illicit trafficking of cultural property continue to be hindered by a range of different factors, including limited awareness and under-prioritization of the issue, lack of data collection, limited implementation and harmonization of relevant legal and policy instruments, and insufficient international cooperation.

Objective

In line with resolution 2617 (2021), which encourages CTED to raise awareness of the importance of Member States' cooperation in addressing different facets of the issue, and in collaboration with UNESCO and the Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations, the side event will provide an overview of current and emerging trends relating to the destruction and illicit trafficking of cultural property and their linkages with terrorism.

The event will convene experts from civil society, academia, relevant intergovernmental organizations as well as criminal justice practitioners, to take stock of efforts aimed at addressing different dimensions of the phenomenon at a national, regional and international level, including through the investigation and prosecution of relevant offences, and the development of relevant action plans and multilateral initiatives. Building on the virtual roundtable on the illicit trafficking of cultural property for terrorist purposes, organized in September 2022 by CTED in close collaboration with UNESCO and the Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations, the discussion will also help delineate ongoing legal, policy and research gaps on the issue, and opportunities to further promote comprehensive accountability efforts in this space.

Format

The event will take place on 22 June in Conference Room 11 of the United Nations Headquarters. It will be conducted in English and in a hybrid format, with virtual connection enabled.

You can RSVP for the event here: <https://forms.office.com/e/SF4MRVLT5w>

Programme

13:15 – 13:30 Opening remarks

Ambassador Gianluca Greco, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations

Ms. Natalia Gherman, Assistant Secretary-General/Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED)

Ms. Krista Pikkat, Director of Culture and Emergencies, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

13:30 – 14:10 Panel discussion

Ms. Lynda Albertson, Chief Executive Officer, Association for Research into Crimes against Art (ARCA)

Col. Matthew Bogdanos, Manhattan Assistant District Attorney, Chief of the Antiquities Trafficking Unit

Mr. Alvaro Sevilla Navarro, Policy Officer, Counter-Terrorism Unit, DG HOME D2 (Counter-Terrorism), European Commission

Ms. Shenaz Muzaffer, General Counsel, International Association of Prosecutors

14:10 – 14:25 Exchange with the audience/Q&A

14:25 – 14:30 Closing remarks

Mr. David Scharia, Chief of Branch, CTED

Moderator: CTED



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