

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
Office of the Spokesperson

For Immediate Release  
September 25, 2015

MEDIA NOTE

**Conflict Antiquities: Forging a Public/Private Response to Save Iraq and Syria's Endangered Cultural Heritage**

The Department of State and The Metropolitan Museum of Art are co-sponsoring an experts' symposium at The Metropolitan Museum of Art on September 29 from 4:30 to 7:00 p.m. that will feature two panels reviewing international cooperation against the looting and trafficking of antiquities from the conflict in Iraq and Syria.

Panel discussions will highlight the connection between ISIL's looting and trafficking of antiquities and the financing of its terrorist operations; emphasize the importance of effective international law enforcement action to curb the activities of traffickers, and unscrupulous dealers and collectors; identify practical ways to share information and documentation on the looting and destruction of Iraqi and Syrian archeological and historical sites; and forge public-private education and advocacy campaigns about best practices for museums, collectors, and auction houses around the world. Presentations will provide new evidence that ISIL is looting for profit and discuss a new initiative to combat the trade in conflict antiquities.

Opening speakers include Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Director and CEO of The Metropolitan Museum of Art Thomas P. Campbell, and UNESCO Secretary General Irina Bokova, followed by two panels.

Speakers on the first panel on "Looting and Destruction of Iraqi and Syrian Cultural Heritage; What We Know, What Can Be Done" will be:

- Michael Danti, American Schools of Oriental Research
- Andrew Keller, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, Department of State
- Robert Hartung, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, Department of State
- Lev Kubiak, Assistant Director, International Operations, Homeland Security Investigations, Department of Homeland Security
- Assistant Attorney General, U.S. Department of Justice
- Mauro Medico, Chief of Section, Terrorism Prevention Branch, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Speakers on the second panel on "The Role of Private Institutions and Collectors in Fostering Best Practices and Public Education" will be:

- Jennifer Janisch, Investigative Producer, CBS News
- Sharon Cott, Senior Vice President, Secretary, and General Counsel, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
- Ute Wartenberg Kagan, Executive Director, American Numismatic Society
- Markus Hilgert, Director, Pergamon Museum
- Sandy Cobden, General Counsel, Christie's Auction House
- Wolfgang Weber, Head of Global Regulatory Policy, eBay

Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Richard Stengel will speak at the conclusion of the event.

The symposium is open to invited guests and registered press. For more information and registration please contact: Natalie Schwich, [communications@metmuseum.org](mailto:communications@metmuseum.org).