

Cultural Heritage Center



CULTURAL HERITAGE CENTER (CHC) leads U.S. cultural heritage foreign policy. It oversees programs and efforts to support the protection and preservation of cultural heritage worldwide, some of which are listed below.

The Department of State established the **CULTURAL HERITAGE COORDINATING COMMITTEE (CHCC)** in 2016, pursuant to the Protect and Preserve International Cultural Property Act. It is a forum where ideas and programs incubated in individual agencies and working groups are shared. The CHCC coordinates diplomatic and law enforcement efforts to combat antiquities trafficking, disrupt trafficking networks, and protect against the looting and destruction of cultural property around the world.

CULTURAL PROPERTY AGREEMENTS are tools for preventing illicit activity. In some countries, it is unlawful to excavate, remove, or export cultural objects without a permit. Once a bilateral agreement is in place and corresponding import restrictions have been imposed, importation of designated objects into the United States is prohibited except under limited circumstances. The goal of such an agreement is to protect cultural heritage by reducing the incentive for further pillage of archaeological and ethnological material. The U.S. has active bilateral agreements with nearly 20 countries and special emergency protection for Iraq and Syria. The Cultural Property Advisory Committee advises the Department on appropriate U.S. action in response to requests from foreign governments for such agreements.

The **U.S. AMBASSADORS FUND FOR CULTURAL PRESERVATION** awards small and large grants for the preservation of cultural sites, cultural objects, and forms of traditional cultural expression in developing countries around the world. Each year, U.S. ambassadors to more

than 140 countries submit project proposals that address important cultural preservation needs. Since 2001, the program has awarded \$74 million for close to 1,000 projects in more than 125 countries.

THE CULTURAL ANTIQUITIES TASK FORCE (CATF), established by Congress in 2004, comprises six federal agencies that share a common mission to combat trafficking in antiquities in the United States and abroad. Along with coordinating activities, the CATF focuses on training law enforcement and customs officials, as well as supporting local governments, museums, and preservationists around the world in the protection, recovery and restoration of cultural antiquities. Since its creation, the CATF has supported more than 75 international and domestic cultural property training programs.

CHC supports **NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURAL HERITAGE** by assisting Native American efforts to recover items held in foreign museums or offered for sale in foreign countries. In coordination with U.S. embassies, CHC connects Native Americans with museum personnel, issues diplomatic correspondence supporting tribal efforts to repatriate items, and supports exchange programs to strengthen relationships between Native Americans and foreign museums. CHC and U.S. embassies also raise awareness overseas about the damage to tribal communities when sacred items are bought and sold through statements, social media campaigns, and press events that feature the voices of Native American leaders, which are especially compelling among foreign audiences.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

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