CHCC Highlights

The Cultural Heritage Coordinating Committee (CHCC) coordinates U.S. government efforts to protect and preserve international cultural property at risk from political instability, armed conflict, and natural or other disasters. The Department of State established the CHCC in 2016 per the Protect and Preserve International Cultural Property Act (Public Law 114-151).

GET TO KNOW THE CHCC

The CHCC consists of 12 U.S. government agencies and is organized into four working groups. The CHCC working groups meet a few times a year and include the participation of nonfederal stakeholders.

CHCC Government Partners

- Department of State
- Department of Homeland Security
- Department of Justice
- Smithsonian Institution
- Library of Congress
- National Endowment for the Humanities
- National Archives and Records Administration
- National Endowment for the Arts
- Department of the Interior
- Department of the Treasury
- Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
- Bureau of Defense

CULTURAL PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION IN SYRIA AND IRAQ

In 2018, HSI and FBI collectively repatriated over: 3,800 cultural objects to 13 countries

DID YOU KNOW

The Department of State’s Cultural Heritage Center (CHC) and the National Park Service’s Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) Program respond to requests from Native American tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations for assistance in repatriating ancestral remains and cultural items held in foreign museums or offered for sale in foreign countries.

CULTURAL PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION IN SYRIA AND IRAQ

The Protect and Preserve International Cultural Property Act (Public Law 114-151) and the Emergency Protection for Iraqi Cultural Antiquities Act (Public Law 108-429) provide emergency cultural property protections for Iraq and Syria. These protections impose import restrictions on archaeological and ethnological material of Iraq and Syria upon entering the United States. Current and recently completed preservation projects:

- Future of Babylon Project | World Monuments Fund and the State Dept
- Post-ISIS Cultural Heritage Recovery | Smithsonian and State Dept
- Protecting Our Cultural Heritage Program | National Endowment for the Humanities
- Mosul Heritage Stabilization Project | University of Pennsylvania and State Dept
- Nimrud Rescue Project | Smithsonian and State Dept

In May 2019, the CHCC voted to create its fourth working group focused on cultural heritage preservation. The working group will include programs for preserving cultural sites, improving emergency preparedness and response, and planning for post-disaster recovery.

LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING

The Cultural Antiquities Task Force (CATF) trains law enforcement and customs officials and supports local governments, museums, and preservation professionals in the protection and repatriation of cultural antiquities around the world.

In 2018, CATF supported:

10+ training sessions in 8 countries with 450+ participants

CULTURAL PROPERTY AGREEMENTS

To combat looting and trafficking of cultural property, the U.S. government has bilateral cultural property agreements with foreign governments. These agreements promote stability, economic development, and good governance in other countries, while denying financing to criminal networks that engage in illicit trade.

A LEGISLATIVE BREAKDOWN

Check out a few pieces of legislation that define the work of the CHCC:

- Archaeological Resources Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 470)
- Native American Graves Protections and Repatriation Act (16 U.S.C. 1170)
- Emergency Protection for Iraqi Cultural Antiquities Act (Public Law 108-429)
- Protect and Preserve International Cultural Property Act (Public Law 114-151)

In 2018, the U.S. government signed agreements to continue existing import restrictions with Belize and Cambodia. The United States signed a new agreement with Libya. The U.S. government received requests for new agreements from Algeria, Ecuador, and Jordan.

CHCC WORKING GROUPS:

- Public Awareness & Partnerships
- Technology
- Cultural Antiquities Task Force (CATF)
- Cultural Preservation

REPATRIATIONS BY THE NUMBERS

Over the past few years, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Homeland Security (HSI) have returned thousands of cultural objects to their countries of origin.

The United States and 17 countries have bilateral cultural property agreements.