



# Himaya: Qatar National Library's programme to combat trafficking of documentary heritage

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45th MELCom International Conference



English Türkçe عربي

الشرق الأوسط Asharq Al-Awsat

Friday, 10 May 2024 - 02 Thul-Q'dah 1445 AH


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## Houthis Accused of Smuggling 4,800 Yemeni Manuscripts, Antiquities



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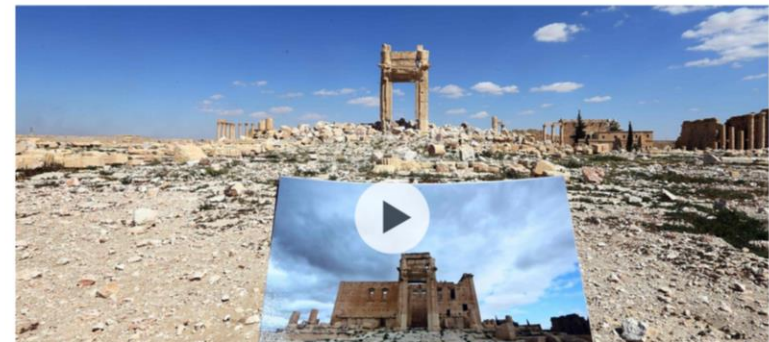


## Antiquities looted in Syria and Iraq are sold on Facebook

2 May 2019

By Steve Swann, Investigations reporter

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## Iraq complains to Interpol as it seeks return of looted artefacts

► Experts say the country's rich history is being lost at 'unprecedented rates' due to conflict



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# Vision and Mission

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## Vision

To be one of the world's preeminent centers of learning, research and culture; **a guardian of the region's heritage**; and an institution that promotes imagination, discovery and the nourishment of the human spirit.

## Mission

**To preserve the nation's and region's heritage and** enable the people of Qatar to positively influence society by creating an exceptional environment for learning and discovery.



**IFLA Strategic Programme**  
**Preservation and**  
**Conservation (PAC)**

Since 2015, QNL has been the IFLA PAC (Preservation and Conservation) Center for Arab Countries and the Middle East.

**What are IFLA  
PAC Centers?**

**ما هي مراكز الإفلا  
للحفظ والصيانة؟**



# Himaya Programme

In 2020, Qatar National Library launched the Himaya programme to help support the fight against trafficking of documentary heritage in the region.

As compared to other cultural artefacts like sculptures, metalwork and so on, manuscripts, books and archives are more at risk, given their portable nature.

In collaboration with many international, region and local organisations including law enforcement agencies.

حماية

means protection,  
care, safekeeping



## Work Areas

- Capacity Building
- Awareness & Advocacy
- Facilitating professional meetings and cross-disciplinary exchanges
- Reports/Studies
- Monitoring system



# Capacity Building

Each year, QNL organises online lectures, courses as well as training workshops minimally in Arabic and English

Some lectures are available on QNL Youtube channel.

Target audience: cultural workers as well as law enforcement officers or legal professionals. Specifically in Qatar, working with Qatar Customs.

Upcoming: Online event on 21 May at 4pm Qatar Time (+3GMT).

“UNIDROIT’s contribution to the fight against illicit trafficking in cultural objects – the 1995 Convention”



The poster features a textured, parchment-like background with a grid pattern. At the top, it displays the logos of the Qatar National Library and several international organizations including UNESCO, UNIDROIT, and the Institut Français. The central text is bilingual, with English on the left and Arabic on the right. A central illustration shows a person in a uniform sitting at a desk with a fan of documents, facing another person. The bottom of the poster includes language information in both English and Arabic.

5 - 8 SEPTEMBER 2022

8 - 5 سبتمبر 2022

COUNTERING TRAFFICKING OF CULTURAL PROPERTY INCLUDING DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE  
JOINT INTERDISCIPLINARY WORKSHOP

مكافحة الاتجار بالممتلكات الثقافية والتراث الوثائقي  
ورشة عمل  
مشتركة متعددة التخصصات

Language: English and Arabic  
(simultaneous translation will be provided)

اللغة: العربية والإنجليزية  
(مع توفر الترجمة الفورية)



## Awareness & Advocacy

Commemorate the International Day Against the Illicit Trafficking in Cultural Property – 14 November

Production of short educational videos about the impact of looting of cultural heritage

Champion the importance of inventories with good description and documentation of holdings in cultural institutions and private owners.

Urge collecting institutions to exercise due diligence during their acquisition process .

Encourage librarians and archivists to report theft to local police as to contribute updates to the INTERPOL stolen works of art database.

Advocacy efforts with relevant ministries and lawmakers to improve laws and regulations regarding documentary heritage protection.

# Facilitating professional meetings and cross-disciplinary exchanges

**Annual Doha Workshop held at QNL** providing the platform for knowledge exchange and enhanced collaboration between heritage professionals and law enforcement agencies.

Topics ranging from restitution, legal frameworks, provenance and due diligence work, alert system to identify stolen items, challenges and so on.

Building up network of professional from different sectors to contribute to the fight



**The 2nd Doha Workshop on Countering the Trafficking of Cultural Property with a Focus on Documentary Heritage**  
10 – 14 September 2023

# Reports/Studies

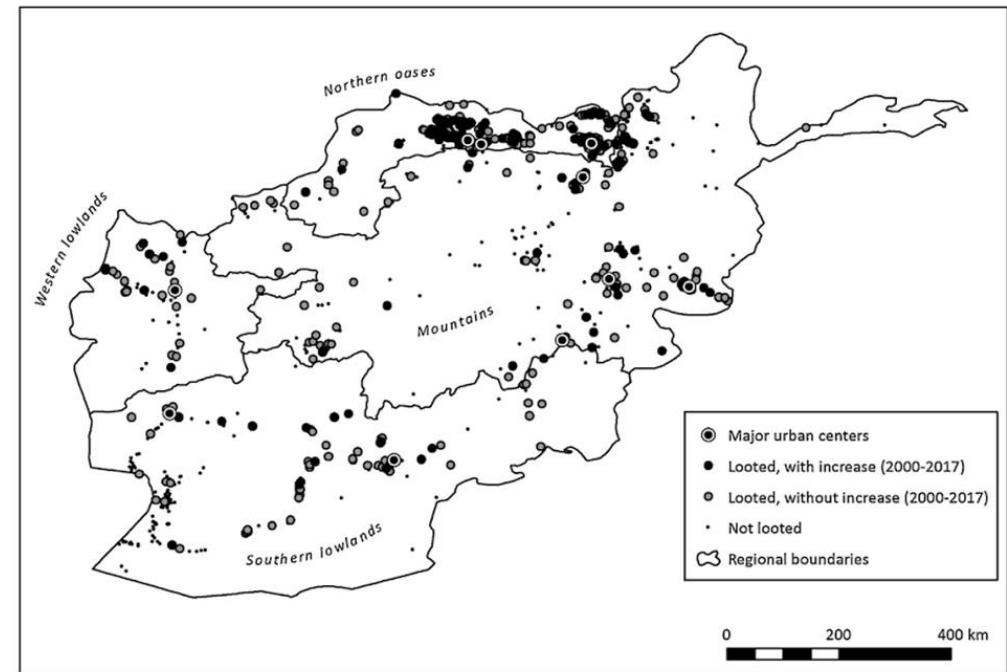
## *Report*

Trafficking and the Circulation of Stolen Antiquities and Documentary Heritage in Afghanistan and its Neighboring Countries: How to Better Understand New Challenges and Opportunities for Interdiction and Cooperation.

## *Upcoming:*

Systematic study of specific International Laws that have not been widely ratified yet in the Arab region and the positive impact they could have on countering illicit trafficking of cultural property

E. Hammer et al. / Journal of Cultural Heritage xxx (2017) xxx–xxx

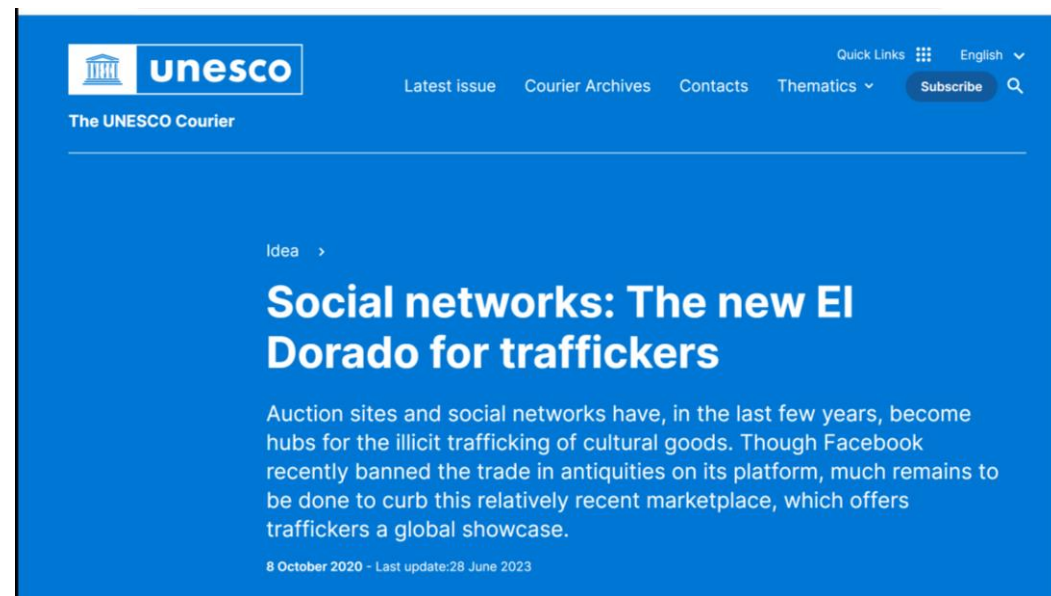


Map of Afghanistan that indicates looted areas and their trends between 2000 and 2017. source: Hammer 2018, page 8.

# Monitoring System

To address the social media problem issue, QNL collaborated with Qatar Computing Research Institute (QCRI) to develop a tool that would help to monitor the sales. A tool that can:

- Automatically retrieve from the Internet (commercial website and social media platforms) posts related to an illegal trade of cultural properties (with focus on manuscripts)
- Ability to document/archive the data collected for analysis



شكر



**Thank you**