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**ICCROM and ALIPH form an Alliance for Cultural Heritage First Aid, Peace and Resilience**

*Safeguarding heritage at the interface of armed conflicts, disasters and pandemics.*

Culture cannot wait. The need to protect individual and collective identities, ways of living, and ties to one’s roots can be so strong that even amidst violent conflicts people will go to great lengths to protect their heritage. Yet, the wide-ranging humanitarian crises induced by armed conflicts severely limit the ability to secure this endangered heritage.

**Alliance for Cultural First Aid, Peace and Resilience** is a ground-breaking project, which in partnership with the [ALIPH Foundation](http://www.aliphfoundation.org), will strengthen capacities for risk reduction, preparedness, response and recovery among communities adversely affected by armed conflicts, extreme hazard events and epidemics. The project focuses on the Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan and Pakistan region (MENAP) affected by intersecting conflicts which has led to extreme vulnerabilities to hazard events and health crises.

The project is built on the principle that integrating cultural heritage protection with humanitarian relief makes a meaningful contribution to alleviating the trauma of affected communities, while promoting early recovery and transition to sustainable peace. Its goal is to form a proactive alliance of “Cultural First Aiders” from the region, who can work with security forces and humanitarians to provide conflict-sensitive protection and care to cultural heritage and contribute to peace and resilience.

Over 23 months, 4 mentors and 20 professionals will be trained to implement between 15 and 20 field projects. They will seek to protect endangered heritage – movable, immovable and intangible – by involving local communities and stakeholders.

ICCROM Director-General Webber Ndoro said, “there is an urgent need to take concrete action to mitigate against the growing cascade of risks and hazards to cultural heritage, and this must begin with building capacities at a local level. In these turbulent times, we must reflect upon the relevance of heritage to vulnerable people in the MENAP region and see it as a tool for change and transformative resilience. We thank ALIPH for their partnership and look forward to working towards this common goal.”

“By training this first ever regional team of Cultural First Aiders, we are not only demonstrating that cultural heritage is a peacebuilding tool, but also we are sending the message to affected populations that their cultural heritage is valuable and that their identities will not be erased,” said ALIPH executive director Valéry Freland. “By joining forces with ICCROM, we have the opportunity to make a concrete difference in the region to protect endangered heritage and the people who live there.”
How the project will unfold

Through targeted training, awareness building and on-the-ground application, Alliance for Cultural First Aid, Peace and Resilience will gather evidence to make the case for culture. This will include:

1. The preparation and translation of learning resources:
   - Videos on how to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on tangible and intangible heritage and associated communities in conflict situations.
   - The Arabic translation of ICCROM’s widely-implemented Handbook and Toolkit on First Aid to Cultural Heritage in Times of Crisis.
   - A learning package on community-based approaches for crisis response and risk management for cultural heritage in conflict areas.

2. Training, both online and in-person
   - A course-design meeting with ICCROM’s professional networks will develop a context-specific curriculum based on multi-hazard and people-centred approaches.
   - Four months of online learning and preparatory mentoring.
   - Two weeks of in-person, hands-on training, which will take place in Cairo, Egypt.
   - Seven months of structured follow-up, which will include seed grants and online mentoring as training participants carry out projects that will see community members trained and greater coordination mechanisms between humanitarian agencies.

3. A post-project publication that will feature stories of participant field projects and successes, as well as lessons learned.

Participants

Half the participants will be drawn from the fields of humanitarian assistance and security forces, while the other half will be cultural heritage professionals. This multidisciplinary group will help embed cultural heritage first aid in local and national responses, creating teams that can be deployed during or after a complex emergency.

"Considering the current situation and the past four decades of war in Afghanistan, one cannot imagine how the cultural heritage of this country has been affected and how urgent action is needed in order for this heritage to be rescued. The Alliance for Cultural First Aid, Peace and Resilience project initiated by ICCROM and the ALIPH Foundation, will be of great help for capacity building and the preparation of on-the-ground cultural heritage experts who will be able to act and respond to the urgent threats to cultural heritage. This will be extremely helpful for us in Afghanistan". - Mohammad Fahim Rahimi, Director of the National Museum of Afghanistan

Partners

ICCROM will collaborate with Egyptian Ministries of Antiquities and Defence; the Egyptian Heritage Rescue Foundation, a foundation created as a result of ICCROM’s training, which is dedicated to the protection of cultural heritage in crises; the Centre for Security Studies, a Zurich based organisation dedicated to promoting the understanding of security policy challenges as a contribution to a more peaceful world; as well as many of its long-standing partners and its alumni network of cultural first aiders. Other partners important to the project will be identified from mainstream agencies working in the field of disaster risk reduction, humanitarian aid and conflict transformation. The expected input of these partners will be at a technical level, to help shape the training modules, as well as develop and promote interagency coordination.