The International alliance for the protection of heritage in conflict areas (ALIPH) said on Tuesday it has allocated another USD 10 million to support 20 projects that safeguard cultural heritage in 12 countries struggling to recover from conflict, particularly in the Middle East and Africa.

Cultural heritage has been targeted in recent years by armed conflicts; its rehabilitation is now essential for social and cultural reconstruction efforts in affected countries.
“Through these interventions, we reaffirm our commitment to help preserve mankind's collective history and to assist those living in countries affected by conflict in building a renewed sense of hope, community and dignity”, said Dr. Thomas S. Kaplan, Chair of ALIPH Foundation Board.

This new funding announcement deepens ALIPH's engagement in three areas of intervention: protecting monuments and sites, safeguarding museums and their collections, and documenting and interconnecting heritage.

The Alliance will also fund, for the first time, an intangible heritage project in Afghanistan to safeguard decorative tile making, carpet weaving and Tambor making. “ALIPH’s support will allow our team to protect, safeguard, and document our priceless heritage which has been gravely weakened by decades of conflict across Afghanistan,” said Hamid Hemat, Cultural Heritage Senior Specialist and Project Manager, at the NGO Turquoise Mountain.

This funding cycle will expand ALIPH's presence from 7 to 12 countries: Afghanistan, Eritrea, Georgia, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Palestine, Peru, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen and a project in Denmark to digitize documents on the heritage of Palmyra, Syria. The depth and scope of these projects is possible only because of the strong support of its Member States and private donors.

ALIPH’s ongoing projects have already achieved several milestones, in particular the long-term initiative “Mosul Mosaic” (Iraq) that aims to rehabilitate sites representative of the cultural and religious diversity of the Old City. For instance, the Mosul Museum has now been stabilized, part of its collections safely stored, and its overall rehabilitation action plan finalized. The next step has just been approved by ALIPH, which aims to restore the collections, build capacities and pave the way for the building's reconstruction.

Two emergency grants in Africa have also concluded: in Mali, staff were trained at the Al-Aqib Library in Timbuktu to restore 3,000 manuscripts, and in Abidjan, the protection of the collection of the Musée des Civilisation de Côte d'Ivoire has been reinforced. “This excellent project is the first of its kind in West Africa. Indeed, thanks to ALIPH’s generous support, the collections of the Museum are now well protected,” said Museum Director, Dr. Silvie Memel-Kassi.