

Conflict Antiquities

THE DOCKET

The Need for Prosecuting Participants in the Illegal Antiquities Trade for Complicity in International Crimes and Terrorism Financing



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8 June 2022



This document constitutes the Introduction, Executive Summary, Methodology, and Recommendations of The Docket's Report entitled "Conflict Antiquities: Prosecuting Participants in the Illegal Antiquities Trade for Complicity in International Crimes and Terrorism Financing".

The full Report is available online on our website at <https://cfj.org/project/the-docket/>.



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The Docket, an initiative of the Clooney Foundation for Justice, gathers evidence of international crimes to trigger prosecutions of perpetrators and support victims in their pursuit of justice.







Introduction

In July 2018, the visitors of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York were awed by the exquisite gilded Egyptian coffin, the center piece of the Nedj-emankh and His Gilded Coffin exhibition. Dating back to first and second century B.C., the coffin was designed for Nedjemankh, a high priest of the ram headed god Heryshef of Herakleopolis. The Metropolitan Museum paid US \$4 million (€ 3.5 million) for the unique, museum-grade artifact.

A few months later, however, the New York District Attorney's Office executed a search warrant at the Metropolitan Museum and seized the coffin. It turned out that the 1.8 meter long coffin was looted from Egypt in 2011 during the Arab Spring and smuggled through the United Arab Emirates, first to Germany and then to France, before the Metropolitan Museum purchased it in July 2017.

The seizure and return of the coffin were the result of a transnational investigation. Prominent antiquities expert and dealer Christophe Kunicki and his associate, Richard Semper, were implicated in first trafficking and then selling the coffin to the Metropolitan Museum. In 2020, French police charged the two men with participating in a criminal association, organized money laundering, forgery, and organized gang fraud. The charges also indicate they were involved in other transactions of looted antiquities smuggled from Syria, Yemen, Libya, and Egypt, worth tens of millions of dollars. Kunicki and Semper were arrested and later released, while the investigation seemingly continues. In the following months, German federal police arrested Kunicki and Semper's alleged German associates for their involvement in the trafficking, as they had helped "launder" the coffin by creating falsified paperwork and documentation. The Metropolitan Museum promised to increase diligence when purchasing items for their collection. The gilded coffin was repatriated to Egypt.

After an investigation by the New York District Attorney's Office revealed that it was looted from Egypt in 2011 during the Arab Spring and smuggled to the United States via an international network, the coffin was seized and repatriated to Egypt.

© Cyrus Vance Jr., Manhattan District Attorney's Office (2019).

The French and German investigations are seemingly ongoing. To this day, there is little information as to how an item of such size and value could have made its way through multiple customs inspections without much scrutiny, and why the transactions raised no red flags with financial institutions. It is unclear whether any inquiry has been launched into the money's final destination. In other words, there are currently no investigations into the profit that the "armed gangs" (as the media referred to them) made from the original sale of the looted sarcophagus, which crimes they financed with the money, and how each intermediary and dealer in the network contributed to the crimes as part of the trafficking transaction.

These questions are not inconsequential. At the repatriation ceremony for the Egyptian coffin, New York District Attorney Cyrus Roberts Vance Jr. stated that the coffin was "just one of hundreds of antiquities stolen by the same multi-national trafficking ring."

Recently, the same New York District Attorney's office entered a plea deal with billionaire Michael H. Steinhardt, under which Steinhardt has surrendered 180 stolen antiquities valued at \$70 million and been barred for life from acquiring any other antiquities. The multinational investigation has determined that the items "had been looted and smuggled from 11 countries" and "trafficked by 12 illicit networks"—yet, the plea agreement means that Steinhardt will not face further investigation or prosecution, and it remains unclear whether any of the illicit networks discovered by the prosecutors will be further investigated. For now, it seems the trafficking networks will continue undisrupted.

The Docket's investigation, detailed in this report, points to the existence of well organized international smuggling networks involved in the sales of looted antiquities from the Middle East and North Africa on European and U.S. markets.

Invaluable artifacts—statues, ornaments, jewelry, books, coins, pottery—have been looted from archeological sites and museums. Terrorist organizations—including the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Jabhat al-Nusra, Hayat Tahrir al Sham, al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, and Ansar al Sharia—and other armed groups have sold

these items via transnational networks to galleries, museums, and collectors in Europe and the United States.

These terrorist organizations and armed groups then use the proceeds—tens of millions of dollars, according to the most conservative estimates—to further finance crimes against civilians and acts of terror.

While international and national laws and regulations contain extensive prohibitions on illegal trafficking of cultural objects, the perpetrators rarely face real consequences. Law enforcement efforts often focus on seizure and restitution of the looted objects and the dealers, even when caught red-handed, receive barely a slap on the wrist, facing mere fines for customs or tax violations or low-level criminal charges for forging provenance and import documents.

To dismantle these criminal networks and create accountability for antiquities dealers who finance conflict, war, and mass atrocities, The Docket carries out investigations aimed at triggering criminal prosecutions against antiquities dealers in Europe and the United States for complicity in international crimes and terrorism financing, where appropriate. We believe this is the most effective way to stop the financing of atrocities through the trade in illegal artifacts and to protect the cultural heritage of the affected communities.



The gilded coffin of Nedjemankh was the headlining piece of the Metropolitan Museum's Nedjemankh and His Gilded Coffin exhibition in 2018.

© AFP via Getty Images

“ISIS kidnapped me in 2014 – they found out I used to work on archeological sites, and they wanted me to serve as an expert and guide their excavations. Except I was an engineer, and thus didn’t really know where the treasures are. But I had to pretend, to survive. They took me to site in Syria, in Deir ez-Zor, for example, but also to Iraq, to Mosul. They had intermediaries in Turkey, who were connected, often through family members, to dealers in Europe.”

~ A Syrian engineer, interviewed in Turkey
August 2021



Executive Summary

Conflict antiquities traded in Europe and the United States are fueling international crimes in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). State and non-state armed groups in Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Yemen have institutionalized the looting of antiquities as a weapon of war and a major source of financing. Looting fuels ongoing conflicts and enables the commission of grave human rights violations and international crimes. These crimes will continue unabated and remain profitable so long as there is largely unregulated international market for illicit antiquities where the dealers, brokers, and intermediaries operate with impunity.

The global traffic in looted cultural objects is at times dismissed as a victimless crime since its harmful aspects are not as apparent as those of trafficking in arms, drugs, or persons. Despite the seemingly benign nature of antiquities, the illicit trafficking of looted antiquities is physically, socially, and culturally destructive. Artifacts are pieces that are often, not only invaluable forms of cultural heritage but also non-renewable resources that can generate income for those who loot and traffic these items for generations.

While looting of antiquities is an ancient phenomenon, over the last decade it has reached a scale not seen since World War II. This escalation is largely due to the ongoing conflicts in the MENA region. Estimates as to the amount of income that it generates for armed groups vary, but most researchers agree that looted antiquities have become a multi-million dollar source of financing for state and non-state actors alike. This funding enables them to continue to commit atrocities, by allowing them to purchase weapons, recruit and compensate new members, and otherwise support their operations in conflict areas and commission of terrorist attacks elsewhere.

State and non-state armed groups in Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Yemen have institutionalized looting of antiquities as a weapon of war and a major source of financing, which fuels ongoing conflicts and enables the commission of grave human rights violations and international crimes.

Illegal looting continues at archaeological sites to this day. A team of looters digs at a site in Syria in 2014.

Satellite images taken in March 2015 of the Temple of Hatra in Iraq show extensive looting pits surrounding the site.

© Google Earth. Captured by Clooney Foundation for Justice.



So far, policy and regulatory measures, as well as legal proceedings focused on customs violations, tax evasion, or property crimes, have not deterred the illicit trade in looted antiquities. There is a growing consensus that only criminal prosecutions of the market-end dealers—which would expose their connection to and role in perpetuating war crimes, crimes against humanity, and financing of terrorism—will ultimately put an end to the illegal business, prevent further looting and destruction of cultural heritage, and bring much-needed redress to the affected communities.

Pillage and other war crimes by armed groups operating in the MENA region

In Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Yemen, the pillage of cultural artifacts is part of a larger pattern of conflict-related violations amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity, including unlawful killings, enforced disappearances, torture, sexual violence, and the destruction of property.

The scale of pillage in these conflicts is overwhelming, making it impossible to document every individual incident. However, The Docket has gathered detailed information on more than 300 incidents of pillage in Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Yemen within the last decade. Almost two thirds of these incidents involve the pillage of cultural property. The primary actors who conduct or facilitate pillage are either insurgent groups (including designated terrorist organizations) or government armed forces or affiliated groups (such as militias). Groups include, among others, ISIL, Jabhat al-Nusra/Hayat Tahrir al Sham, al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, and Ansar al Sharia.

Most incidents of pillage occurred in places containing large amounts of cultural or religious artifacts, such as museums, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage sites, archeological sites, and archeological storage warehouses as well as at churches, mosques, shrines, and other important religious sites.

- **In Syria**, tens of thousands of items have been pillaged from archaeological sites and at least 40,635 items have been looted from museums. These items



Reports indicate that pillage was rampant in Mari, Syria, an ancient Mesopotamian city on the right bank of the Euphrates River, particularly when ISIL assumed control over the territory around June 2014. Looting pits visibly show up on satellite images of Mari from this time, as seen above.

© Google Earth. Captured by Clooney Foundation for Justice.

include mosaics, relief sculptures, ceramic, stone, and alabaster sculptures, ceramic and bronze tablets, steles, jewelry, and coins.

- **In Iraq**, ISIL extensively pillaged the city of Mosul in northern Iraq, including its universities, libraries, and museums; the archeological sites of Nineveh and Nimrud; and religious sites associated with Yazidi, Christian, and Muslim communities.
- **In Libya**, the pillage of cultural property occurred predominantly in the eastern and northern regions, including the UNESCO sites of Cyrene and religious sites associated with Sufi communities in Tripoli.



- **In Yemen**, ongoing pillage has targeted major museums and archeological sites, including an estimated 12,000 items looted from the Dhamar Museum, 16,000 items from the Military Museum in Sana'a, and 120,000 items from the national museum in Sana'a.

Pillage and destruction of cultural property constitute war crimes under international law and the domestic laws of European States. In addition to being a crime on its own, pillage is often part of a wider pattern of criminality and a source of income that has enabled ISIL and other armed groups to commit war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity. These crimes have been widely documented and are currently subject to prosecution in a number of domestic jurisdictions.

Patterns of trafficking

Looted antiquities from Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Yemen arrive in European and U.S. markets via complex international networks that include smugglers, dealers, intermediaries, and brokers across the North Africa, the Middle East, Gulf countries, Asia, and Eastern Europe.

Understanding these routes, as well as those through which armed groups access the resulting funds, is critically important for establishing the complicity of market-end art dealers in crimes committed by state and non-state armed groups on the ground in the source countries.

Specific routes vary depending on the country of origin of the looted antiquities. In some cases, they have also

In December 2016, the United States Department of Justice filed a forfeiture case for various items, including the above gold ring with carved gemstone and the carved Neo-Assyrian Stone. These specific items were linked to ISIL operations after the United States raided the compound of ISIL Commander Abu Sayaff in 2015, which led U.S. forces to seize documents related to ISIL's financing operations. The seized documents indicate that ISIL bureaucratized the looting and trafficking of antiquities in the geographic areas they control in order to finance their terror operations.

© Press Release, United States Files Complaint Seeking Forfeiture of Antiquities Associated with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), U.S. Department of Justice (Dec. 15, 2016).

Examples of the types of items looted and smuggled out of Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Yemen

As circulated in Red Lists of Cultural Objects at Risk by the International Council of Museums.

© Red Lists of Cultural Objects at Risk for Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Yemen, International Council of Museums.

Syria



Iraq



Libya



Yemen



“For items appraised more than 100,000 dollars, a Turkish dealer would cross into Syria to check the item. Third party would be holding the case, so that the payment can be released once the parties agreed. Sometimes we were contacted by Europeans directly—through an app which allows you to have a foreign phone number. Europeans have their preferences – mainly looking for items from early Christianity, but other items, as long as their authenticity can be verified, are in demand.”

~ A Syrian digger and smuggler, interviewed
remotely in Turkey
August 2021

Freeports are tax-free warehouses created to temporarily retain manufactured goods and have been repeatedly implicated in storing looted antiquities.

© Fred Merz for The New York Times
© Arcis via Art News



How are antiquities “laundered” and smuggled through various countries?

A number of methods are used by trafficking intermediaries to avoid customs inspections and conceal the illicit nature of the artifacts, including:

- false declaration of the value of a shipment (lower than market value);
- false declaration of the country of origin of a shipment (a transit rather than source country);
- vague and misleading descriptions of a shipment’s contents;
- splitting a single large object into several smaller pieces for separate deliveries, allowing informal entry and reassembly later after receipt;
- addressing a shipment to a third party, falsely stated to be the addressee or purchaser, for subsequent transfer to the actual purchaser;
- failure to complete appropriate customs paperwork;
- concealing antiquities in shipments of similar, legitimate commercial goods;
- and addressing shipments to several different addresses for receipt by a single purchaser.

changed over time because countries change their laws or enforcement policies to make certain routes harder, thus forcing the networks to look for alternatives.

The two main routes for antiquities originating in Iraq and Syria are Turkey and Lebanon. The Docket’s research has shown that both remain active to date. From Libya, looted antiquities are mainly smuggled through Egypt and Tunisia. From Yemen, the items are mainly smuggled through the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, and Qatar. Other transit portals are East European countries, such as Bulgaria and Romania, as well as Thailand, Jordan, Kuwait, Israel, and Singapore.

Transit countries are essential for the process of “laundering” the antiquities (i.e., providing customs or export documentation to legitimize their subsequent sale). The UAE, and particularly Dubai, appear to be an important transit point through which items originating in the Middle East and North Africa arrive to Europe and where laundering occurs.

Freeports—essentially, tax-free warehouses created to temporarily retain manufactured goods—play an important role in the international trafficking of looted antiquities. In freeports, antiquities originating from any country can be held for an unlimited period of time and

at minimal expense until they are released to the market. Freeports, including ones located in Europe and particularly in Switzerland, have been repeatedly implicated in storing looted antiquities.

Finally, over the last decade, the trade in illegal antiquities has also become prominent online, particularly through online auctions and e-commerce websites, as well as through social media platforms. Facebook contains dozens of groups where the trade in questionable antiquities seemingly occurs, and some of the administrators are individuals affiliated with designated terrorist groups. Other social platforms allegedly used to trade in illicit antiquities include Instagram, Skype, and WhatsApp. Hundreds of items are also being sold at online auctions such as Ebay, Vcoins.com, Trocadero.com, and others, where annual sales of antiquities far exceed those of offline auction houses.

Antiquities dealers as possible accomplices to war crimes and financiers of terrorism

The Docket’s research has established that the archeological artifacts pillaged in Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Yemen are trafficked to Europe and the United States via international networks that have been on the radar of law enforcement agencies for decades. Yet these dealers have managed to avoid any significant consequences for their criminal activity so far.

The Docket’s work has focused on collecting information that links prominent dealers operating in European and U.S. markets to antiquities pillaged in conflict areas in the MENA region by designated terrorist and other armed groups. Much of this information cannot be shared pub-



The Docket has submitted initial evidence packages to prosecution and law enforcement authorities.

© Clooney Foundation for Justice

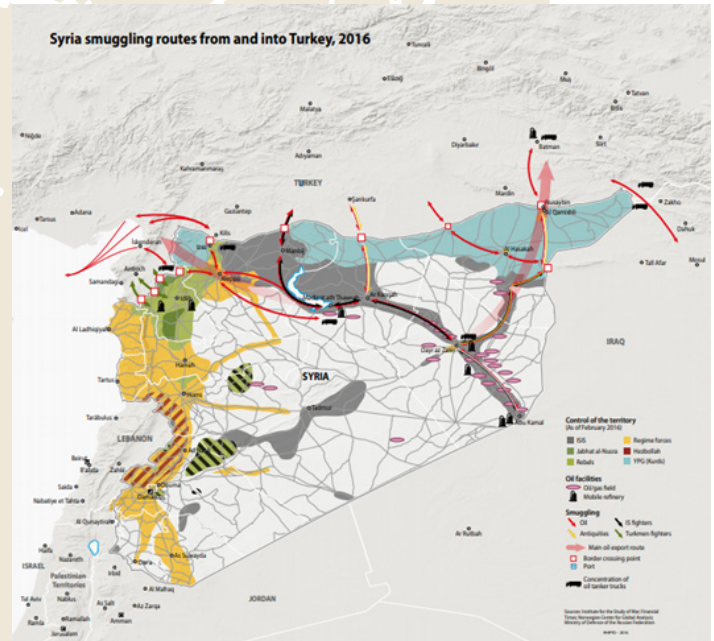
Market	Local		Regional		Global
Sources	Archaeological site	Museum	Neighboring nation	Transfer nation	Safe-haven nation
Destinations	Short-term holding area		New "collecting nation"		Existing "collecting nation"
Players	Local excavator	Smuggler	Dealer	Collector	Dealer, Museum, Collector
Border crossing	Smuggled across international border				Imported through formal channels
Transaction venue	Existing contact	Online	Broker	Gallery	Online, Gallery, Auction house
	Near-term market				Long-term market
Authorization	None		Bribes to customs		Falsified provenance
Regulations	National laws with excavation restrictions		International conventions with export restrictions		Bilateral agreements with import restrictions
Role of technology	Encrypted messaging, social media		Social media, online auctions		Social media, online auctions, electronic storefronts

A conceptual model of the antiquities market.

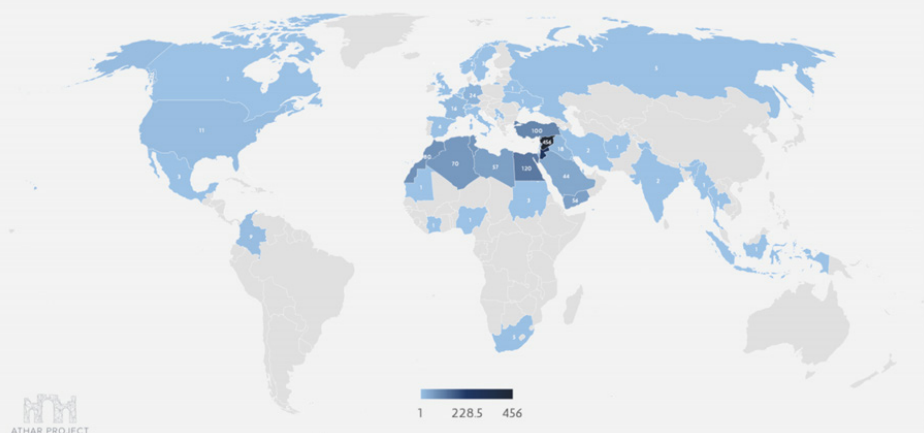
© Matthew Sargent et al., Tracking and Disrupting the Illicit Antiquities Trade with Open Source Data (2020).

The ATHAR Project conducted an in-depth study of the use of Facebook groups by antiquities dealers for the sale of illicitly trafficked and often looted antiquities.

© Amr Al-Azm & Katie A. Paul, Facebook's Black Market in Antiquities, Trafficking, Terrorism, and War, Antiquities Trafficking and Heritage Anthropology Research Project (June 2019).



ATHAR Syria Case Study: Sale Offers for Antiquities Trafficking Facebook Groups A, B, C, & D
 Number of Individual Posts Offering Artifacts by Country Listed in Their Profile



The World Atlas of Illicit Flows has mapped the trafficking flows out of Syria and into neighboring countries, including Turkey.

© World Atlas of Illicit Flows, INTERPOL (2018).

licly at present for legal reasons, but this report contains an overview of the available evidence, which points to the need and viability of prosecutions. While this report refers to a few illustrative cases, in which specific individuals are named, it is limited to only the cases that have been publicly reported on—in the media or official statements from law enforcement agencies.

The initial evidence packages have been shared with prosecutors in several European countries and with U.S. law enforcement agencies – specifically, in jurisdictions to which these individuals are connected through their nationality, residency, or business transactions. Where possible, The Docket continues to gather relevant evidence to enable the prosecution of antiquities dealers for complicity in war crimes, financing terrorism, and related charges.

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While the legal frameworks differ from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, the criminal codes of most European countries as well as the criminal statutes of the United States contain provisions that allow authorities to prosecute the dealers as either accomplices to war crimes and other international crimes or as financiers of terrorist activity. In general, to establish criminal liability in such cases, it must be established that the antiquities were looted by a group involved in criminal behavior and that the dealers knowingly traded in such items, thus providing the funds that allowed the armed groups to commit atrocities.

Need for criminal prosecutions

The problem of looting and illegal trade in antiquities from MENA and other conflict regions has been exten-

sively discussed at the international, European, and national level for years. Multiple policy and regulatory initiatives have been implemented, yet they have had little success in curbing either looting and destruction of archeological sites or the international trade in conflict antiquities. This is largely due to insufficient regulatory focus on the source countries as well as a lack of standardization of measures across transit and market countries, which continue to be easily exploited by antiquities trafficking networks.

While market demand drives and enables the entire trafficking chain, the market remains the least regulated part of that chain. Attempts to regulate it are often undermined by the strength of lobbying groups, and an imbalance of power between market-end dealers and ultimate receivers of the looted antiquities and the communities from which they have been looted.

International enforcement efforts have focused almost exclusively, with a few notable exceptions, on the recovery and return of stolen objects to the country of origin. Seizures and civil forfeitures, however, appear to have no deterrent effect on the dealers. Such penalties are largely perceived as the cost of doing business and, at times, even boost the dealers' business, since restitutions are seen by the market as proof that the dealer trades in authentic (rather than fake) antiquities.

While policy measures, regulation, and restitution are important, only criminal prosecution—particularly prosecutions that result in significant financial losses and custodial sentences—is likely to have the necessary deterrent effect to disrupt the illegal trade of antiquities, prevent further looting, and stem the flow of funds into the hands of terrorist and other armed groups.




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The Docket team on field research in Iraq and Syria.

© Clooney Foundation for Justice



“Before Daesh came to the area, we hid the smaller items from the site storage in our house. But then they found out, surrounded the house, and broke in. They held me at gunpoint and threatened to kill my children unless I showed them where the items were. I had to show them and they took everything. They said those were idolized and needed to be destroyed, but we know that instead they sold them to get more money to buy weapons. They had smugglers working with them to move the items across the border and sell to the dealers”.

~ A curator of an archeological site near
Raqqa, Syria
November 2021

Recommendations

The Docket has approached the issue of illicit looting and trafficking of archeological artifacts from the specific angle of conflict financing. Accordingly, the recommendations contained in this report focus primarily on ensuring successful prosecutions of actors involved in the illicit trade on serious criminal charges, including complicity in international crimes and financing terrorism. Respectable international and national civil society organizations and academic collectives working on the issues of cultural heritage protection have previously issued detailed policy recommendations to enhance regulatory, legislative, and industry-focused measures aimed at preservation, conservation, and protection of archeological sites and artifacts. The recommendations below should be considered alongside these valuable contributions from cultural heritage experts, whose work is referenced throughout this report.

The Docket recommends conducting investigations and pursuing criminal prosecution on charges of complicity in war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide as well as the financing of terrorism for those who engage in the illicit trade in looted antiquities to stop the funding of conflict and terrorism throughout MENA.

To the UN Security Council, UNESCO, UNITAD, and other international organizations

- Reflecting the international nature of these crimes and networks, international organizations should collaborate and support information- and resource-sharing among States to uncover and dismantle these illicit networks trafficking in looted antiquities.
- The United Nations Security Council should condemn the looting of cultural heritage in MENA by armed groups and terrorist organizations and continue to recognize that such looting fuels and exacerbates conflict. The Security Council should call on Member States to request and provide cooperation in investigations, domestic prosecutions, and judicial proceedings, particularly in accordance with domestic legal frameworks implementing international crimes, money laundering, and terrorism financing.

- United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD) should support the investigation and prosecution of those involved in networks that illicitly traffic looted antiquities to ensure accountability for acts that may amount to atrocity crimes committed by ISIL and to ensure that the interests of survivors are placed at the center of such efforts.
- UNESCO should leverage its expertise on cultural heritage and applicable legal protections to assist international organizations and domestic authorities in uncovering and dismantling these illicit networks trafficking in looted antiquities. UNESCO should endorse an independent monitoring team to observe the trade of antiquities and encourage responsible collecting and trading. UNESCO should continue to explore and support the development of international protocols and standards to address emerging threats to cultural heritage.
- The International Criminal Court's Office of the Prosecutor should address alleged crimes against or affecting cultural heritage in all stages of its work as summarized in its June 2021 *Policy on Cultural Heritage*.
- International organizations should support the establishment of permanent and interdisciplinary research groups to allow for strong, specific, and coherent academic research to further innovative thinking.
- The European Union should extend the scope of regulation on illegal imports to easily portable and low-value items, which constitute the bulk of the online trade of looted artifacts.

To INTERPOL, EUROPOL, and law enforcement agencies

- Law enforcement agencies should allow for effective collaboration between agencies through the enactment of mutual legal assistance treaties. Where mutual legal assistance treaties exist already, law enforcement should provide efficient responses to foreign assistance requests to ensure investigations proceed quickly and judiciously.
- Law enforcement agencies should develop and implement trainings between various agencies, particularly those with specialized war crimes and cultural heritage units, to share best practices and processes for initiating and building strong investigation files for international crimes, money laundering, and terrorism financing related to the illicit trade in looted antiquities. Encourage collaboration in such trainings with non-governmental organizations, private institutions, or other stakeholders whose specialized knowledge could contribute.
- Law enforcement agencies should produce and publish regular and detailed follow-up reporting on arrest and seizure operations to allow the public access to reliable data.
- Law enforcement agencies should report data on cultural property sei-

zure operations to the World Customs Organization for inclusion in its annual Illicit Trade Report.

To national authorities and governments

- States should actively support and cooperate with the International Criminal Court in prosecuting international crimes against or affecting cultural heritage.
- States should hold individuals and corporations accountable for their involvement in war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide, including when those crimes involve or affect cultural heritage.
- States should provide funding and resources to ensure law enforcement authorities are able to properly investigate networks involved in the illicit trade of looted antiquities for complicity in international crimes, money laundering, and terrorism financing.
- States should ensure that relevant departments (for example, the art crime unit and the international crimes unit) are able to collaborate and share information effectively and efficiently to properly investigate the full scale of these crimes.
- States should open and support structural investigations of these networks participating in the illicit trade of looted antiquities to collect information and evidence even when the perpetrators are not yet known.
- Where necessary, States should enact domestic legislative changes to ensure prosecution of perpetrators for international crimes (war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide), money laundering, and terrorism financing.
- States should ensure victims' voices are centered. They should enact and effectuate any procedural safeguards, including facilitating non-governmental organizations as civil parties and setting the conditions to allow for universal jurisdiction cases.
- To protect the abuse of international and domestic financial systems by these perpetrators, States should sanction targeted individuals and entities involved in the illicit trade of looted antiquities and diligently enforce any sanctions violations.
- States should recognize how the networks that illicitly traffic looted antiquities use corporate entities, foreign companies, and offshore trusts to facilitate their transactions and support law enforcement and judicial authorities in holding such entities accountable for their role in these crimes.
- States should implement non-self-executing international instruments such as the 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (the UNESCO Convention) and pursue their rigorous enforcement.

To civil society actors

- Civil society actors should develop digital collaboration between academics and research institutions by funding a regularly maintained and centralized system of information accessible to researchers across the world, as well as law enforcement and local governments.
- Civil society actors should enhance transdisciplinary collaboration between funded academics and scholarly initiatives to monitor the illicit market of looted artifacts and investigative initiatives able to liaise with law enforcement agencies with reliable data and in-depth research.
- Civil society actors should develop synergies with responsible partners belonging to the art industry.
- Civil society actors should focus on the multi-faceted impact of the illicit trade of looted antiquities to ensure that damage is not only assessed by the monetary value of the trade but also by the material and human damage caused by the illicit trade of looted antiquities.
- Civil society actors should enhance collaboration between international non-governmental organizations and local partners to provide humanitarian support and reconstruction efforts of damaged or looted archaeological sites post-conflict.
- Civil society actors should participate in criminal and judicial processes as civil parties and experts to seek redress for victims of pillage of antiquities and other international crimes.

To the art and antiquities industry and related private institutions

- As persons most likely to be in contact with looted antiquities, private institutions should support law enforcement in investigating these crimes and judicial authorities in prosecuting these crimes by reporting suspicious antiquities or persons who may be involved in the illicit trade of looted antiquities.
- Private institutions should support and develop self-regulated trade through the enactment of ethical codes of best practice with effective enforcement mechanisms for those involved in the trade of antiquities to ensure that no illicitly looted antiquities enter the market.
- Private institutions should support the strengthening of due diligence requirements and detailed provenance research to stop the circulation of illicitly looted antiquities in the market.
- Private institutions should develop and implement trainings to ensure all staff understands that trading in looted antiquities is a crime that can finance conflict and terrorism. Trainings should also address the

importance of due diligence requirements and allow staff to identify suspicious transactions or antiquities that were potentially looted and illicitly trafficked.

- Private institutions and actors should raise awareness among the general public and potential new antiquities collectors that the illicit trade of looted antiquities is not a victimless crime and those who participate in these networks are complicit in international crimes.

To online sale platforms and social networks

- Sales websites and online platforms should provide detailed and visible information relating to the definition of an antiquity, clearly indicate the provenance of the item, and inform about the risk of buying illegally imported artifacts.
- Social media platforms such as Meta should provide training to civil society and investigators to assist in identifying linkages between different accounts.
- Social media platforms should accept and respond to preservation orders from NGOs, if the request is targeted to particular accounts of interest and with a defined purpose, and as long as the request falls within the mandate of the NGO.



Methodology

This report is based on extensive research and documentation conducted by The Docket initiative at the Clooney Foundation for Justice.

The Docket team consists of experienced investigators, international lawyers, forensic archeologists, open-source intelligence (OSINT) analysts, and other experts. The project is supported pro bono by several international law firms, as well as global companies specialized in financial and corporate investigations.

Primary Evidence

The Docket's documentation included hundreds of interviews with witnesses, informants, forensic archeologists and cultural heritage specialists, journalists, law enforcement officials, policymakers, representatives of international organizations, and others. Field work has been carried out in multiple locations in Lebanon, Turkey, Syria, and Iraq.

Open-Source Research...

...included gathering information on the trafficking chains and networks: incidents of pillage as well as activities and profiles of terrorist and armed groups operating in the source countries of Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Yemen; market-end dealers; and transit countries and intermediaries. Part of this research focused on online and social media platforms involved in the illegal trade in antiquities.

Legal Research...

...included the analysis of international and national legal frameworks related to antiquities trafficking, war crimes and crimes against humanity, the offence of financing of terrorism, and relevant modes of liability.

The Docket reviewed hundreds of academic and media articles and books, covering all aspects of the international trade in illicit antiquities, as well as numerous videos, photographic materials, and satellite imagery of looted sites and specific objects, which were then analyzed by the experts to identify the locations of the looting sites or the origins and authenticity of the items.



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