

Cultural Heritage Center



Photo Credit: Cultural Heritage Center

The **CULTURAL HERITAGE CENTER** leads U.S. cultural heritage diplomacy. Cultural Heritage Center efforts protect and preserve culture worldwide. This work fights terrorist financing from antiquities trafficking, and strengthens international law enforcement cooperation. It promotes stability, economic development, and good governance. It shows American respect for foreign cultures, and builds mutual understanding through cultural exchange.

The Department of State established the **CULTURAL HERITAGE COORDINATING COMMITTEE (CHCC)** in 2016 under the Protect and Preserve International Cultural Property Act. The CHCC's mission is to coordinate activities of member agencies in protecting and preserving international cultural property; preventing and disrupting looting and illegal trade and trafficking, particularly when linked to terrorist and criminal organizations; protecting and preserving sites of cultural significance; and providing for the lawful exchange of international cultural property.

CULTURAL PROPERTY AGREEMENTS are tools for preventing illicit activity and promoting exchange. In some countries, it is unlawful to excavate, remove, or export cultural objects without a permit. Bilateral cultural property agreements establish U.S. import restrictions on designated objects. The goal is to protect cultural heritage by reducing the incentive for pillage. The United States has active bilateral agreements with countries around the world and emergency protection for Iraq, Syria, and Yemen. The Cultural Property Advisory Committee reviews foreign government agreement requests and provides advice.

The U.S. AMBASSADORS FUND FOR CULTURAL PRESERVATION awards grants to preserve sites, objects,

and traditional practices in developing countries around the world. U.S. ambassadors to more than 140 countries submit proposals. Since 2001, the program has awarded over \$96 million for more than 1,000 projects worldwide.

THE CULTURAL ANTIQUITIES TASK FORCE (CATF) is a group of six federal agencies that share a common mission to combat antiquities trafficking. It was established by Congress in 2004. The CATF coordinates interagency activities, focusing on training law enforcement and customs officials. It supports local governments, museums, and preservationists around the world to protect, recover, and restore antiquities. The CATF has supported nearly 100 training programs in the United States and overseas.

The Cultural Heritage Center supports efforts to recover **NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURAL HERITAGE** held in foreign museums or offered for sale in foreign countries. Working with U.S. embassies, it connects Native Americans with museums, issues diplomatic correspondence for repatriations, and strengthens relationships between Native Americans and foreign museums with exchange programs. The Cultural Heritage Center and U.S. embassies also raise awareness overseas about the damage to tribal communities when sacred items are bought and sold.



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