



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

6 June 2012

Dear Ms. Bokova,

I wish to thank you for your letter dated 7 May 2012 in which you expressed deep concern about the increasing threat posed by the current crisis in Syria to cultural property and stressed the importance of ensuring that the provisions of the international conventions regarding the protection of cultural property are respected.

I fully share your concern for Syrian cultural heritage in this context. It is distressing that some of the country's most significant archaeological sites have reportedly been caught in the crossfire. It is also worrisome that cultural objects may be targeted for looting or theft and channelled into international markets. The need for a greater commitment to cultural heritage protection by all those involved in the conflict in Syria is indeed important.

In this regard, I would like to express my appreciation for your ongoing efforts aimed at ensuring protection for Syrian cultural heritage. In particular, I am encouraged by your attempts at reminding the Syrian authorities of their responsibility to ensure the protection of the outstanding cultural legacy of Syria and the neighbouring countries of their obligations in this respect under international law. I also note your recent letter to the President of the Security Council drawing his attention to the need for referring to Syrian cultural property in future Council resolutions.

Your letter was shared with Mr. Kofi A. Annan, Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States on Syria, and with the United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria. Nevertheless, you will recall that their current mandates are limited to what is stipulated in General Assembly resolution A/RES/66/253 and Security Council resolution 2043 (2012).

Ms. Irina Bokova
Director-General
United Nations Educational, Scientific
and Cultural Organization
Paris

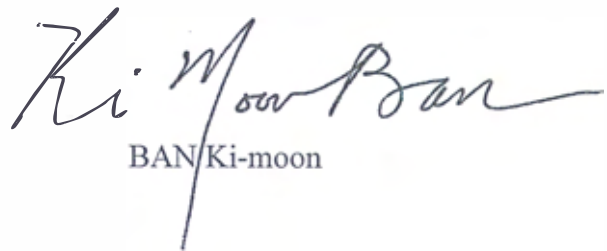
INR/04/001 POL/01/001 PKG/01/001
12-05178 / 12-04683



I am grateful for your offer of support, particularly concerning the location of cultural heritage sites and risks affecting them under current circumstances. I would also appreciate any more concrete and detailed information you could share with me regarding the extent of the damage to cultural property already incurred in Syria, as well as incidents in the future where, in your view, my public advocacy can be constructive.

I am hopeful that greater commitment to cultural heritage protection by all those involved in the conflict in Syria can be ensured. I continue to count on your efforts in this regard.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ki Moon Ban". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a long horizontal stroke at the end. Below the signature, the name "BAN/Ki-moon" is printed in a small, sans-serif font.

BAN/Ki-moon



To: Ms. Malcorra,

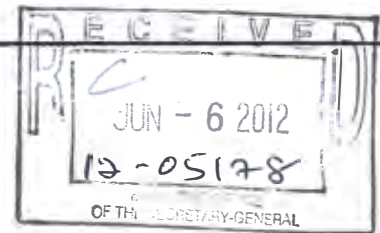
Please find attached for your approval and SG's signature a letter addressed to the Director-General of UNESCO, in reply to her letter of 7 May, regarding the need for protection of cultural property in Syria.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'AG'.

Political Unit
6 June 2012

12-05178

ACTION AG
COPY CAC



ROUTING SLIP FICHE DE TRANSMISSION		<input type="checkbox"/> Routine <input type="checkbox"/> Unclassified	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Immediate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Confidential	<input type="checkbox"/> Most Immediate <input type="checkbox"/> Strictly Confidential
TO/A: Ms. Susana Malcorra, Chef de Cabinet				
CC:				
THROUGH/WISE PAR:				
FROM/DE: B. Lynn Pascoe, USG, DPA				
Date: 5 June 2012	Ext: 3-5055	Room No. – No de bureau: NL-2060		
FOR ACTION		POUR SUITE A DONNER		
FOR YOUR ATTENTION	XX	FOR VOTRE ATTENTION		
FOR INFORMATION		POUR INFORMATION		
FOR APPROVAL / SIGNATURE	XX	POUR APPROBATION / SIGNATURE		
FOR COMMENTS		POUR OBSERVATIONS		
AS REQUESTED		SUITE A VOTRE DEMANDE		
RETURN		RETOURNER		

(Press related corlog 12-04683)

SUBJECT/MESSAGE: Please find attached for the Secretary-General's signature a draft letter address ed to Irina Bokova, the Director-General of UNESCO in response to her letter of 7 May 2012 regarding the need for protection of cultural property in Syria.

OK
Bw

INR/04/001
POL/01/001 ; PEG/01/001



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للثرففة والعلم والثقافة

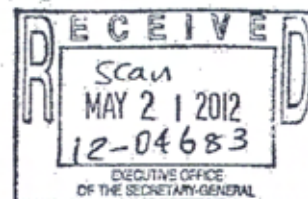
联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

The Director-General

ACTION Mr. Pascoe / Mr. Ladson

copy Cd C
AG

Mr Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General
United Nations
New York, NY 10017
United States of America



7 MAY 2012

Ref.: DG/4.1/12/313/53

Dear Secretary-General,

I have the honour to refer to Resolution 2043 (2012), adopted by the Security Council on 21 April last, authorizing the establishment of a UN observer mission for Syria, to monitor the cessation of armed violence by all parties and the implementation of the UN Joint Special Envoy's six-point proposal to end the conflict.

I would like to express to you my deep concern over the increasing threats to cultural property in Syria, brought about by the current situation in that country. Experience has demonstrated that in the midst of rampant violence, social unrest and lawlessness, cultural objects are often targeted for looting or theft. They also may be channelled onto international art markets, a practice that would deprive the Syrian people of their precious cultural heritage.

With this in mind, I wrote to the Syrian Permanent Delegate to UNESCO a few months ago to remind Syrian authorities of their responsibility to ensure the protection of cultural heritage. Moreover, on 30 March last, I issued a press release warning all parties involved in the conflict to respect Syria's outstanding cultural legacy.

More recently, I have contacted INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization, as well as the French and Italian special police forces, and alerted them to the possibility of an influx of illicitly exported cultural objects from Syria. Furthermore, I have called the urgent attention of Syria's neighbouring countries who are party to the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, to their obligation under this Convention, as appropriate. These countries include Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, Turkey and Iraq. Israel, however, is not a State Party to the 1970 Convention. For this reason, in my letter, I referred to the possibility that some of the principles of the 1970 Convention also may be said to be rooted in general customary international law.

.../.

Allow me to take this opportunity to propose that you alert Kofi Annan, the Joint Special Envoy for the United Nations and the League of Arab States on the Syrian crisis and the UN supervision mission to Syria, to the importance of ensuring that the provisions of the international conventions regarding the protection of cultural property are respected. UNESCO stands ready to provide its expertise in this area, notably as concerns location of cultural heritage sites and risks affecting these sites in the current situation. You may wish to know that in a recent letter to the President of the UN Security Council, I already proposed that a reference to Syrian cultural property be included in any future Security Council Resolution concerning the situation in that country.

I would be most grateful for your urgent attention to this matter and stand prepared to provide any further information you may require.

With my best personal regards, I remain,

Cordially,

Yours sincerely,

Irina Bokova

Irina Bokova