

# Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict

Done at the Hague, 14 May 1954

Entered in force: 7 August 1956

## Preamble

The High Contracting Parties,

*Recognizing* that cultural property has suffered grave damage during recent armed conflicts and that, by reason of the developments in the technique of warfare, it is in increasing danger of destruction;

*Being convinced* that damage to cultural property belonging to any people whatsoever means damage to the cultural heritage of all mankind, since each people makes its contribution to the culture of the world;

*Considering* that the preservation of the cultural heritage is of great importance for all peoples of the world and that it is important that this heritage should receive international protection;

*Guided* by the principles concerning the protection of cultural property during armed conflict, as established in the [Conventions of The Hague of 1899 and of 1907](#) and in the [Washington Pact of 15 April, 1935](#);

*Being of the opinion* that such protection cannot be effective unless both national and international measures have been taken to organize it in time of peace;

*Being determined* to take all possible steps to protect cultural property;

Have agreed upon the following provisions:

## CHAPTER I: GENERAL PROVISIONS REGARDING PROTECTION

### *Article 1. Definition of cultural property*

For the purposes of the present Convention, the term "cultural property" shall cover, irrespective of origin or ownership:

- (a) movable or immovable property of great importance to the cultural heritage of every people, such as monuments of architecture, art or history, whether religious

- or secular; archaeological sites; groups of buildings which, as a whole, are of historical or artistic interest; works of art; manuscripts, books and other objects of artistic, historical or archaeological interest; as well as scientific collections and important collections of books or archives or of reproductions of the property defined above;
- (b) buildings whose main and effective purpose is to preserve or exhibit the movable cultural property defined in sub-paragraph (a) such as museums, large libraries and depositories of archives, and refuges intended to shelter, in the event of armed conflict, the movable cultural property defined in subparagraph (a);
- (c) centres containing a large amount of cultural property as defined in subparagraphs (a) and (b), to be known as "centres containing monuments".

#### *Article 2. Protection of cultural property*

For the purposes of the present Convention, the protection of cultural property shall comprise the safeguarding of and respect for such property.

#### *Article 3. Safeguarding of cultural property*

The High Contracting Parties undertake to prepare in time of peace for the safeguarding of cultural property situated within their own territory against the foreseeable effects of an armed conflict, by taking such measures as they consider appropriate.

#### *Article 4. Respect for cultural property*

1. The High Contracting Parties undertake to respect cultural property situated within their own territory as well as within the territory of other High Contracting Parties by refraining from any use of the property and its immediate surroundings or of the appliances in use for its protection for purposes which are likely to expose it to destruction or damage in the event of armed conflict; and by refraining from any act of hostility directed against such property.
2. The obligations mentioned in paragraph 1 of the present Article may be waived only in cases where military necessity imperatively requires such a waiver.
3. The High Contracting Parties further undertake to prohibit, prevent and, if necessary, put a stop to any form of theft, pillage or misappropriation of, and any acts of vandalism directed against, cultural property. They shall refrain from requisitioning movable cultural property situated in the territory of another High Contracting Party.
4. They shall refrain from any act directed by way of reprisals against cultural property.
5. No High Contracting Party may evade the obligations incumbent upon it under the present Article, in respect of another High Contracting Party, by reason of the fact that the latter has not applied the measures of safeguard referred to in [Article 3](#).

### *Article 5. Occupation*

1. Any High Contracting Party in occupation of the whole or part of the territory of another High Contracting Party shall as far as possible support the competent national authorities of the occupied country in safeguarding and preserving its cultural property.
2. Should it prove necessary to take measures to preserve cultural property situated in occupied territory and damaged by military operations, and should the competent national authorities be unable to take such measures, the Occupying Power shall, as far as possible, and in close co-operation with such authorities, take the most necessary measures of preservation.
3. Any High Contracting Party whose government is considered their legitimate government by members of a resistance movement, shall, if possible, draw their attention to the obligation to comply with those provisions of the Convention dealing with respect for cultural property.

### *Article 6. Distinctive marking of cultural property*

In accordance with the provisions of [Article 16](#), cultural property may bear a distinctive emblem so as to facilitate its recognition.

### *Article 7. Military measures*

1. The High Contracting Parties undertake to introduce in time of peace into their military regulations or instructions such provisions as may ensure observance of the present Convention, and to foster in the members of their armed forces a spirit of respect for the culture and cultural property of all peoples.
2. The High Contracting Parties undertake to plan or establish in peacetime, within their armed forces, services or specialist personnel whose purpose will be to secure respect for cultural property and to co-operate with the civilian authorities responsible for safeguarding it.