Protection of Cultural Heritage in Idlib Governorate, Syria
ICOMOS-ICCROM e-learning course for Syrian cultural heritage professionals in times of armed conflict
Press release – 27 August 2013

ICOMOS, in cooperation with ICCROM and the Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums of Syria (DGAM) held a new e-learning course for the Syrian cultural heritage professionals of Idlib on 21 August 2013. The course was led by the ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Risk Preparedness- ICORP and follows on from an earlier course held in Damascus in January 2013.

The training course for Idlib Governorate responds to the immediate and urgent needs expressed by local heritage professionals and volunteers, who are actively in charge of protecting heritage sites and collections. The technical and scientific training provided during the e-learning course addressed the question of how to protect cultural heritage during a conflict situation, and how to provide first aid and emergency responses to damaged sites and collections.

Idlib Governorate is home to some of the most significant ancient sites of the country, including the Ancient Villages of Northern Syria, inscribed on the UNESCO List of World Heritage in Danger.

About 100 participants, including DGAM staff and experts of cultural heritage, and also first aiders from the Red Crescent, followed the lectures given by ICOMOS and ICCROM trainers through video-conferencing. The course team included recognized professionals from Syria, UK, India, Spain, Iran and staff members of ICCROM. While ICCROM and ICOMOS contributed staff time for the implementation of this activity, the other lecturers voluntarily offered to share their knowledge and expertise.

This workshop was planned as a follow-up activity to an earlier e-learning course held in January 2013 at The National Museum of Damascus. ICOMOS and ICCROM are working on providing practical guidelines in Arabic and English for salvaging and securing damaged cultural heritage.

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Additional resources:
Documents
- Idlib e-learning course document- 21 August 2013-08-22
- Protection of Syria’s Cultural Heritage in Times of Armed Conflict: ICOMOS - ICCROM e-learning course for Syrian cultural heritage professionals- January 2013
- ICOMOS – ICCROM e-learning Course booklet and programme
- Protecting Cultural Heritage in Times of Conflict (ICCROM publication, 2012)

ICOMOS Statements on Syria
- ICOMOS Statement on Crac des Chevaliers and the continuing destruction of the cultural heritage of Syria- 19 July 2013
- ICOMOS Statement on Aleppo- 27 July 2012
ICOMOS, the International Council on Monuments and Sites, is a unique non-governmental, not for profit international organisation, committed to furthering the conservation, protection, use and enhancement of the world’s cultural heritage. It dedicates itself to the development of common doctrines, the evolution and circulation of knowledge, the creation of improved conservation techniques, and the promotion of cultural heritage significance. It gathers over 12100 members from over 133 countries, and benefits of 101 National Committees.  
www.icomos.org

ICORP, the International Committee on Risk Preparedness is one of the 28 International Scientific Committees of ICOMOS. The goals of the Committee are to enhance the state of preparedness within the heritage institutions and professions in relation to disasters of natural or human origin, and to promote better integration of the protection of heritage structures, sites or areas into national, local as well as international disaster management, including mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery activities. ICORP also supports ICOMOS in its role as the founding partner of the International Committee of the Blue Shield (ICBS).  
http://icorp.icomos.org

ICCROM, the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property, is an intergovernmental organization dedicated to the conservation of cultural heritage. It exists to serve the international community as represented by its Member States, which currently number 132. It is the only institution of its kind with a worldwide mandate to promote the conservation of all types of cultural heritage, both movable and immovable. ICCROM aims at improving the quality of conservation practice as well as raising awareness about the importance of preserving cultural heritage.  
www.iccrom.org/

Both ICOMOS and ICCROM are official advisory bodies to the World Heritage Committee for the implementation of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention.

The Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums of Syria (DGAM) is responsible for the implementation of the Syrian law on Antiquities, archaeological excavations, museums as well as cultural heritage listing, restoration and maintenance. It manages thousands of listed sites across the country, about 180 national and international missions, about 38 museums and has a branch in every governorate. Its activities also include exhibitions and publications. It is placed under the authority of the Ministry of Culture.