**Intersessional Workshop on Cultural Rights and the Protection of Cultural Heritage**

14 June 2021 | 3PM – 5PM (CEST)

15 June 2021 | 10AM – 12PM & 3PM – 5PM (CEST)

**Concept Note**

(*as of 27 May 2021*)

# Mandate

In its resolution [37/17](https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/RES/37/17) entitled “Cultural rights and the protection of cultural heritage”, the Human Rights Council requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights:

(a) To convene, before the forty-fourth session of the Human Rights Council, and in collaboration with the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, relevant agencies and other stakeholders, a two-day workshop in Geneva with the participation of experts from all regions of the world to develop appropriate tools for the dissemination of an approach to the protection, restoration and preservation of cultural heritage that promotes universal respect for cultural rights by all; and

(b) To submit a report thereon to the Human Rights Council at its forty-sixth session.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions, the organization of the workshop was postponed under Human Rights Council Decision 45/113 to a date before the forty-seventh session, with a report now due to be submitted at the forty-eighth session.

# Background

The protection of cultural heritage is provided for under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. As noted by the Special Rapporteur in the field of culture, its legal basis derives, particularly, from the right to take part in cultural life, the right of members of minorities to enjoy their own culture and the right of indigenous peoples to self-determination and to maintain, control, protect and develop cultural heritage (A/71/317).

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has underscored the obligation of States to respect and protect cultural heritage in all its forms, in times of war and peace, and natural disasters. The Committee also noted that cultural heritage must be preserved, developed, enriched and transmitted to future generations as a record of human experience and aspirations, in order to encourage creativity in all its diversity and to inspire a genuine dialogue between cultures.

Against this background, the intersessional workshop will focus on the following themes: (a) mainstreaming a human rights-based approach to cultural heritage, including tools; (b) cultural heritage in crisis; and (c) supporting the work of cultural rights defenders working on cultural heritage protection.

The objective of the workshop is to draw content for the development of tools for the dissemination of the rights-based approach to the protection, restoration and preservation of cultural heritage as called for under resolution 37/17. Participants are, therefore, encouraged to provide input on any issues which should be covered by such tools.

# Outcome

OHCHR will submit a report on the workshop to the Human Rights Council at its 48th session.

# Format

Each session will focus on a different thematic area, starting with an introduction of the theme by the panellists followed by an interactive discussion. The workshop will be organised as follows:

1. **Panel I: (Monday 14 June from 15:00 to 17:00 CEST): Mainstreaming a human rights-based approach to cultural heritage, including tools**
2. **Panel II: (Tuesday 15 June 2021 from 10:00 to 12:00 CEST): Cultural heritage in crisis**
3. **Panel III: (Tuesday 15 June 2021 from 15:00 to 17:00 CEST): supporting the work of cultural rights defenders working on cultural heritage protection**

Each panel session will begin with a presentation by the panelists, followed by an interactive discussion. Information regarding participation, including the submission of pre-recorded statements for the interactive discussion, and technical guidance as well as the online platform hosting the event, is available separately. Simultaneous interpretation will be available in six languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish).

# Background documents

* Human Rights Council resolution 37/17 on cultural rights and the protection of cultural heritage
* Report of the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights (A/HRC/31/59)
* Report of the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights (A/HRC/37/55)
* Report of the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights ( A/71/317)
* [General Comment 21 of the Committee on Economic, social and cultural rights](http://undocs.org/E/C.12/GC/21) (E/C.12/GC/21, 2009)