

THE LAWYERS'
COMMITTEE FOR
CULTURAL
HERITAGE
PRESERVATION

We, the Lawyers' Committee for Cultural Heritage Preservation, stand with our colleagues around the world condemning threats to target cultural heritage sites for destruction.

Threats made by the United States President to destroy cultural sites in Iran are in contravention of long-standing US policies to avoid damaging such sites during conflict. The United States is party to a number of international conventions, including the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and the Protocols of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and 1979, that dictate against heritage destruction. The recent threats made by the President were particularly troubling because the US has played a pivotal role in safeguarding art and heritage during war. Our nation was one of the first to enact a code to protect culture during conflict. During the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln signed the Lieber Code, which outlines military conduct for Union soldiers and emphasizes the importance of protecting cultural material during war. Since then, the US has continued efforts to protect art and heritage, both domestically and abroad. In fact, a mere two months ago, the US Army Reserve partnered with the Smithsonian to establish a modern-day "Monuments Men" program, following the success of the program in preserving art during and after World War II. The group works to preserve cultural heritage and recover items damaged or stolen during times of conflict.

The cultural heritage of Iran is important not only to Iranians, but to all humanity. Any act targeting Iranian cultural sites is an act against mankind and its achievements.

We call upon all world leaders to recognize the value of cultural heritage and to take all appropriate actions to safeguard it for future generations.



Katherine Kaplan
LCCHP Executive Director