

# CULTURE IN DANGER – CULTURE AS A DANGER

CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE FRONT LINE OF RECENT  
WORLDWIDE CONFLICTS

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*«Those who cannot remember the past are condemned  
to repeat it».*

(George Santayana, 1905)<sup>1</sup>

## 1. Introduction

«Today we say: enough. Even war has rules»<sup>2</sup>: with these words, Doctors without Borders USA Representative Jason Cone denounced the bombing to Kunduz trauma center in Afghanistan. This statement, together with the rightfully sharp and outspoken speech delivered to the UN Security Council on May 3rd, 2016 by Dr. Joanne Liu, President of Doctors without Borders International in the occasion of the recent bombing to Al Quds Hospital in Aleppo Syria<sup>3</sup>, witnesses and underlines with dramatic evidence how recent conflicts have reached the lowest bottom of inhumanity and unethical behaviors from belligerent sides.

The daily tragedies none of us can really run away from under extremely detailed and massive media coverage bear witness to the escalation of war conducts and give evidence to the frequency of wanton attacks to hospitals, communities, places of worships, cultural heritage sites. Recent conflicts in many parts of the world have gone way beyond the common human agreements and rules defined by the United Nations, International Regulations and Conventions defined and ratified in the aftermath of WWII. Other than the human emergencies everybody is aware of, the recent conflicts are showing with appalling obviousness that wars are aiming not only at the military objectives, but targeting more and more the social lives of people, their values, and their culture.

The deliberate attacks to famous heritage sites in the Middle East are tearing away big pages of human history, destroying the landmarks of Countries that have been considered the cradle of civilizations. The

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