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# CULTURAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE

CONFLICTS AND NATURAL DISASTERS DAMAGE AND DESTROY NOT ONLY HUMAN LIVES BUT ALSO THE WORLD'S CONTEMPORARY AND HISTORIC CULTURAL HERITAGES. CULTURAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROVIDES EMERGENCY AID TO ACUTELY ENDANGERED CULTURAL HERITAGE WORLDWIDE.

FREEDOM OF CULTURAL EXPRESSION AND RESPECT FOR CULTURAL IDENTITY ARE THE IDEALS UNDERPINNING CULTURAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE. A PEOPLE'S PAST PROVIDES THE MATERIALS FOR ITS FUTURE. WHEN CULTURAL HERITAGE IS DESTROYED PEOPLE SUFFER A FUNDAMENTAL LOSS, ONE THAT IS NOT SUFFICIENTLY RECOGNISED. THROUGH A TIMELY RESPONSE, CULTURAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE AIMS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.



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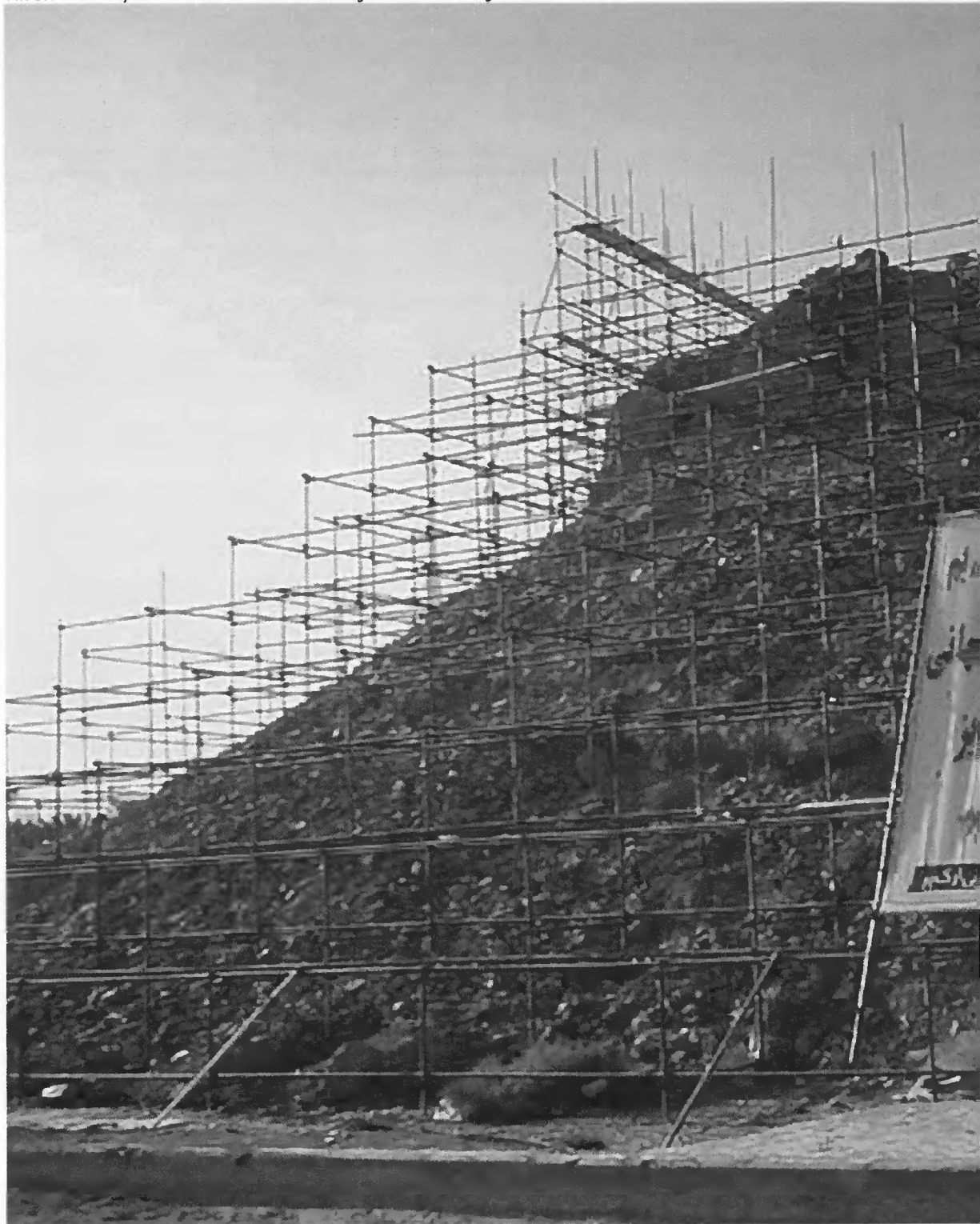
Prince Claus Fund for  
Culture and Development

The International  
Committee of the Blue  
Shield (ICBS)

Comité International du  
Bouclier Bleu (CIBB)



Bam citadel under scaffolding after the earthquake of 26 December 2003  
Photo: courtesy of the Iranian Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization





# CULTURAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Cultural Emergency Response was inaugurated on 26 September 2003 by the Prince Claus Fund and the International Committee of the Blue Shield, to provide limited emergency assistance in the event of damage to, or destruction of, cultural property arising from man-made or natural disasters.

- 'Cultural property', for the purposes of Cultural Emergency Response, is broadly defined as including collections of documents and artefacts, buildings, monuments and sites, representing contemporary as well as historical cultural heritage. For practical purposes, the definition of 'cultural property' used in this brochure corresponds to the definition used in the Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict.\*
- Assistance may be provided in any part of the world, subject only to the availability of access and appropriate security. Priority shall normally be given to countries or regions of the world that are politically and economically unstable.
- Assistance provided by Cultural Emergency Response will take the form of providing funding for direct action in order to secure immediate impact on the protection, preservation or restoration of the cultural property concerned.
- Cultural Emergency Response (CER) provides 'first aid'. Each disaster will be assessed in terms of immediate needs; this will involve both local and international expertise.
- All cases differ. CER has not drawn up a standard list or tool kit for how to respond to disasters. The challenge is to react in a proper way. Hence, it is important to rely on local networks.
- Action is not only important in terms of the donation of money and materials but also for sharing solidarity with those experiencing a disaster.

\* From the Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, 1954: '...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 sub-paragraph (a);
- c. centres containing a large amount of cultural property as defined in sub-paragraphs (a) and (b), to be known as 'centres containing monuments'.

## INDICATOR

The aim of CER is to perform the role of indicator: to focus attention on cultural emergencies through activities, and by doing so also attract additional funding. Rather than directing its efforts solely at large-scale or mediagenic disasters, CER will also offer assistance and stabilisation in emergencies that might otherwise go unnoticed due to their scale, geography or some other reason.

Within six months after a disaster, Cultural Emergency Response will initiate action based on news reports, experts' recommendations or tips from parties involved in the cultural sector worldwide. CER draws on the networks of the Prince Claus Fund and the International Committee of the Blue Shield and is developing its own specialised network.

## ORGANISATION

The Cultural Emergency Response Steering Committee decides on the action to be taken and directs the course of CER's development. The Steering Committee is chaired by Louk de la Rive Box, Rector of the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague. The founders are represented in the persons of Els van der Plas, Director of the Prince Claus Fund, and Joan van Albada, President of the International Committee of the Blue Shield. As Secretary, Marlous Willemsen is responsible for all aspects of CER's implementation.

The Prince Claus Fund and the International Committee of the Blue Shield are the founders of Cultural Emergency Response.

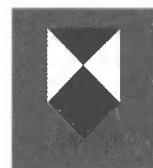


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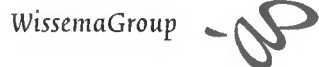
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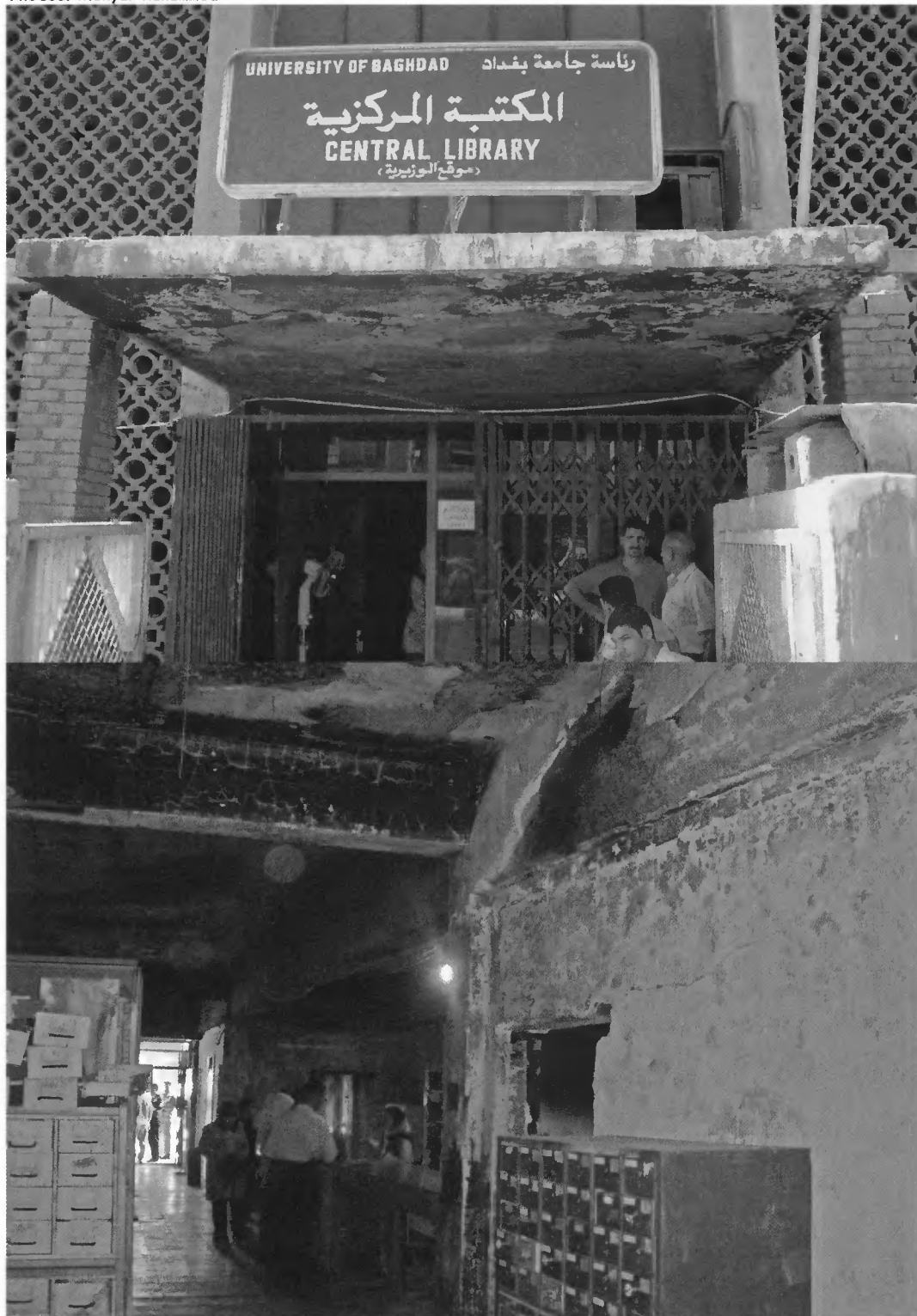


Cultural Emergency Response appreciates the advice of Wissema Group Business and Policy Consultants and of Pels Rijcken & Droogleever Fortuijn.



F.J. Oranje, civil-law  
notary in The Hague

Pels Rijcken  
& Droogleever  
Fortuijn  
*advocaten*  
& *notarissen*



# ACTIONS OF CULTURAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE

## 2003–2004

### **Baghdad**

Cultural Emergency Response was presented on 26 September 2003. During the launch event at the Prinsenhof Museum, Delft, Netherlands, Wishyar Muhammed, Iraqi Adviser on Libraries and Archives, received 25,000 euro for the reconstruction of the Central Library of the University of Baghdad, Al-Waziriya site.

'Following the collapse of Saddam's regime in Iraq in April 2003 not only government offices and public buildings were looted and burned, but also libraries and museums were not safe from such barbarous acts. Among them was the Central Library of the University of Baghdad. We were desperate and thought that the library would never re-open. However, it was through the help of good friends of the Iraqi people and of human culture and civilisation, that it became possible to refurbish it,' said Wishyar Muhammed. In his report to UNESCO, Jean-Marie Arnoult, Inspector General at the National Library in Paris, writes that 'Iraqi libraries have been deeply disturbed, in their premises, in their collections and in their personnel. This statement is less spectacular in the sight of public opinion but it alone bears testimony to a major catastrophe for the country. Reorganising the daily life of libraries and archives, indispensable tools for a return to serenity, organising their net and their respective administrations, are considerable tasks a democratic country can't be deprived of.'

The University of Baghdad will renovate the Central Library building. In the meantime, in consultation with Wadhah Al-Gebouri, Director of the Central Library, Wishyar Muhammed has purchased a number of computers and airconditioning units to cope with the terrible heat of Baghdad that is affecting people as well as books. Limited facilities will once more be available to the students from the autumn of 2004 onwards. Once the Central Library building is restored, it will be equipped with additional airconditioning units (for the reading room and the book stack area), stand fans, photocopying machines, as well as more computers to complete the sets of tables and chairs purchased by the Library.

Aerial view of Bam citadel and other historical buildings after the earthquake  
Photo: courtesy of the Iranian Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization





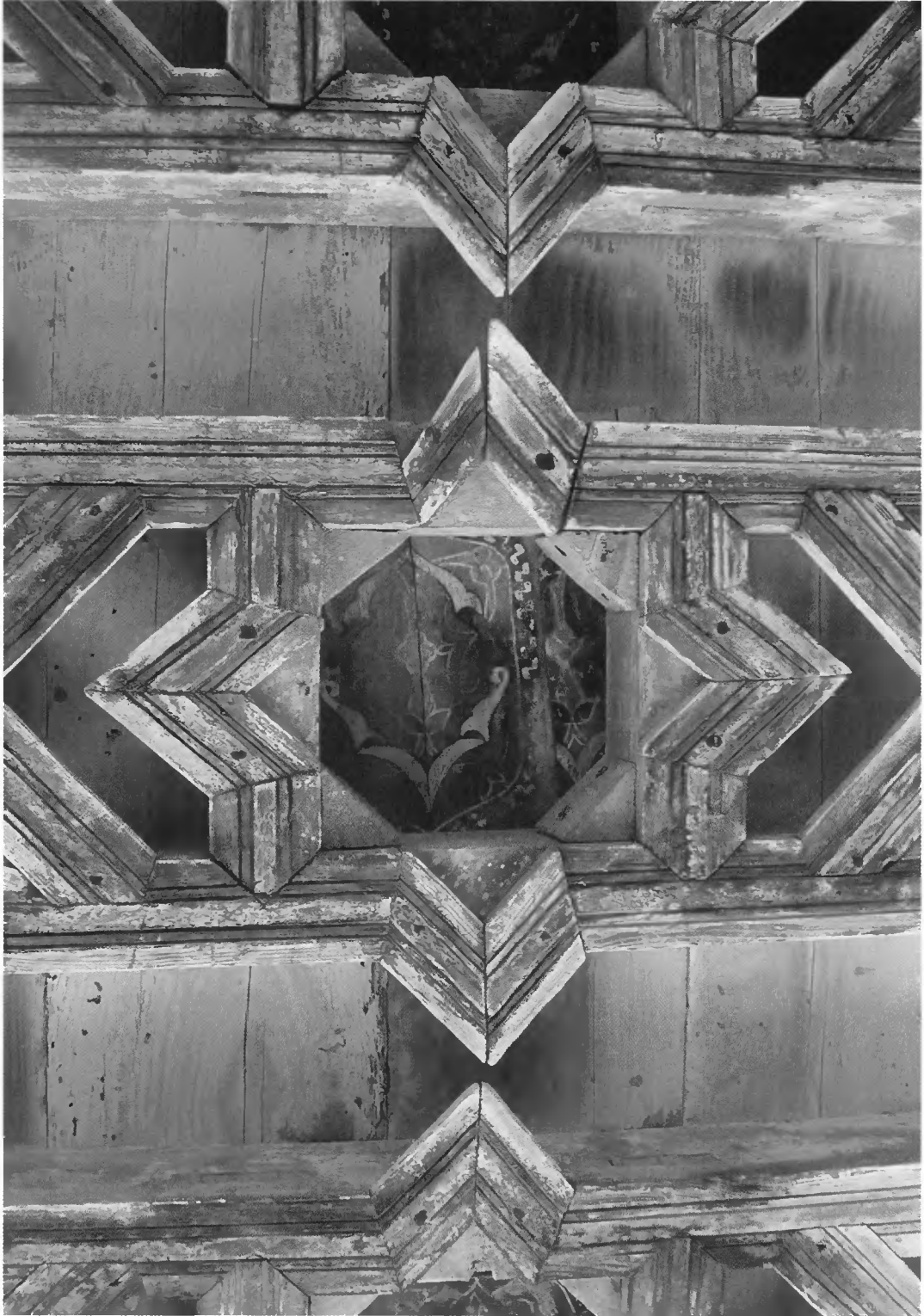
## Bam

Over 2000 years old, the citadel of Bam in the South of Iran is one of the largest earthen structures in the world. On 26 December 2003 the oasis city was badly hit by an earthquake. The citadel, Arg-e Bam, for over 20 centuries a fort city and now an archaeological reserve after the population abandoned it, was extensively damaged. ICOMOS Secretary-General Dinu Bumbaru reports: 'The South Gate has collapsed as did many of the upper parts of the some 38 towers of the walls and many sections of the restored castle. The architectural vestiges have collapsed in many places and the site is now filled with debris of archaeological interest. Yet, overall, Arg-e Bam remains a powerful and meaningful place whose history has even been exposed further by the revealing of ancient sections of the fortification by the sudden removal of some sections.'

'After the earthquake of Bam an important task to start with was, and still is, to collect existing documents from the pre-earthquake periods (aerial photographs, photographs, maps, etc.); the rescue of documents from the research base within the citadel itself (we had a large research base within the site comprising of thousands of documents); and, perhaps the most important of all, documentation of the current state of the historic sites (aerial photography, mapping, photogrammetry, laser scanning of documentation, digitalisation of drawings and maps, etc.). This phase is in fact a determining work because it would produce the necessary technical data and information upon which the main phase of the restoration of the sites will be built up and planned,' wrote Rasool Vatandoust, Director of the Research Centre for Conservation and Cultural Relics and Head of the Department of Cultural and International Relations of the Iranian Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization.

Cultural Emergency Response is contributing 25,000 euro to saving the archive material and documenting the post-disaster situation. Some construction and restoration techniques withstood the earthquake better than others. By studying them, the Iranian Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization aims to improve the knowledge of earthen heritage in seismic areas.

The ceiling of the mosque of Mestassa  
Photo: Mohammed Cheikh



## Mestassa

Mestassa is 70 kilometres from Al-Hoceima, North Morocco. The mosque of the village dates from the Merinids Era (1244–1465) and is a vernacular version of the architectural style of this Berber dynasty. The 14th century building has remained standing in this earthquake region for 700 years. It also survived the terrible earthquake of 24 February 2004, a day that saw the collapse of many other buildings, including those of re-migrants from the Netherlands.

The mosque of Mestassa is solidly built, using construction techniques that helped it resist nature's violent forces. The minaret is also relatively short. However, on 24 February 2004, the fabric of the building was cracked, jeopardising the mosque's stability and future. With a contribution of 25,000 euro from Cultural Emergency Response, Mestassa Community can restore its mosque, and continue to use it as the centre of village life. Before the earthquake, the mosque was a place to pray and catch up on news, to celebrate weddings, births and circumcisions, and also served as a school for Mestassa's youngest inhabitants. But after the earthquake, reports Chaib Massaoudi, the mosque will only be fit for continued use unless it is restored. At the request of Cultural Emergency Response, Massaoudi inspected the effects of the earthquake in Al-Hoceima on cultural property in the region.

Under the architectural direction of Mohammed Cheikh, the outer wall will be redoubled and the existing wall reinforced. The exterior, including the garden and entrance, will be reconstructed. The drainage system, the well, and the chimney at the entrance will be repaired and the entire building will be given a fresh coat of whitewash. The restorations aim to preserve the mosque of Mestassa as a model for sustainable building in North Morocco, and as a safe social centre and school.

The mosque of Mestassa village  
Photo: Mohammed Cheikh





# THE FOUNDERS

## Prince Claus Fund

The Prince Claus Fund considers culture to be a basic human need. Cultural expression and cultural heritage are essential to people's identity. The Fund, established in 1996 to further the ideals of the late Prince Claus of The Netherlands, believes that a people's own ideas and ideals are the driving force of their development; that culture and development are intimately linked. At its core are respect for difference, honour for people's dignity and belief in their ability to direct their own lives and culture.

The Fund aims to honour 'excellence' based on respect and trust; to select initiatives that are experimental and for which financial assistance, protection and recognition are highly significant; to support individuals and informal groups not necessarily linked to a specific project or organisation; to strongly advocate intercultural and intellectual debate which has long-term impact; to attach great importance to intercultural exchange which is generated in innovative ways; to foster an engaged attitude, in a world in which the risks attached to such an attitude are not always taken, and offer support and recognition to those who do this regardless of the difficult circumstances in which they sometimes have to operate; to adopt both passive and active strategies in relation to its partners as appropriate, as sponsor, protector and observer, or as initiator and executor.

The Prince Claus Fund seeks to survey and highlight the dynamics of culture and development. Knowledge, study and use of their cultural heritage – their illustrated manuscripts, domestic or religious architecture, flags and costumes, their stories, poems, dramas and songs, their music and dance – enable people to create and maintain their identities, societies and ways of living. In co-operation with individuals and organisations in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Fund creates platforms for debate; it stimulates creative processes and artistic productions; it initiates and finances conferences, workshops, exhibitions, festivals, networks; it funds and publishes books, magazines, websites; and it supports the production of works of art. The Prince Claus Awards are given annually to recognise and honour outstanding work in culture and development throughout the world. The Prince Claus Fund always takes into consideration the positive effects that activities will have within a wider social and cultural context.

[www.princeclausfund.nl](http://www.princeclausfund.nl)



F o n d s

Prince Claus Fund for  
Culture and Development

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## International Committee of the Blue Shield

The International Committee of the Blue Shield (ICBS) works for the protection of the world's cultural heritage according to requirements stipulated in the 1954 Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. The records of human civilisations – archives, books, manuscripts, tablets, monuments, artefacts of all kinds, historic sites, and the structures which house them – are the common inheritance of all humanity. We need them to survive down the centuries so that we can anchor ourselves both in the past and in the present.

But our shared cultural heritage is vulnerable. It needs protection from disasters – those brought on by people (wars, conflicts, accidents and fires) and by nature (floods, earthquakes and other disasters). One form of protection is the Blue Shield. The Blue Shield is the official symbol of the Hague Convention that makes provision for the safeguarding of cultural property. The Hague Convention requires states to protect cultural property in times of peace and to safeguard it in times of armed conflict. On 9 March 2004, the Second Protocol to the Hague Convention came into force which establishes the concept of a 'cultural war crime'. The concept of a cultural war crime means that those responsible for the deliberate damage to and destruction of cultural institutions (and collections) can be prosecuted.

The ICBS was founded in 1996 by the four international NGOs representing the interests of archives, libraries, monuments and sites, and museums: the International Council on Archives (ICA), the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the International Council of Museums (ICOM) and the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA). It works closely with UNESCO, whose representatives attend its meetings, as well as with observers from the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). It is supported at local level by a network of national committees of the Blue Shield.

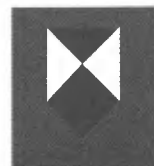
The remit of the ICBS is to:

- facilitate international responses to threats or emergencies threatening cultural property;
- encourage safeguarding and respect for cultural property, especially by promoting risk preparedness;
- train experts at national and regional level to prevent, control and recover from disasters;
- advise on the protection of endangered heritage;
- consult and co-operate with other bodies including UNESCO, ICCROM and the ICRC.

[www.ifla.org/blueshield.htm](http://www.ifla.org/blueshield.htm)

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Front cover: Central Library of the University of Baghdad, Al-Waziriya site, July 2004

Photo: Wishyar Muhammed

Back cover: Entrance to the Kabul Museum, 2002

Photo: UNESCO

پایتخت زندگی زندگی میماند که با کوردها  
تاریخ خویش را زنده نگه دارد.  
A NATION STAYS ALIVE WHEN  
ITS CULTURE STAYS ALIVE.

# CULTURAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE

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Cultural Emergency Response is located at the Prince Claus Fund. You can contact Mariou Willemsen for further information on CER, for suggestions for action, and if you would like to financially support Cultural Emergency Response.