

The International Legal Framework Governing the Protection of Cultural Heritage

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The study delves deeply into the historical contexts of the countries involved, examining how the idea of cultural heritage and its protection under international law has changed through the years and in various social, economic, and political climates. When preserving cultural assets under public international law, we also consider the humanitarian aspect of this phenomenon. The study examines whether people and groups limit a state's power to act beyond limitations imposed by other states and international organizations. This research further examines the role of international human rights laws in this setting, the preservation of the individual's connection to cultural products, and whether or not an individual becomes a significant player in international law. The study's findings provide conclusive evidence of the pivotal catalytic role that UNESCO and similar international organizations play in the worldwide preservation of cultural heritage. UNESCO is the principal venue for monitoring whether or not states are adhering to international protection principles. Whether or not UNESCO can be effective without ratification processes for cultural preservation has to be investigated more deeply. The study's findings indicate that protecting cultural assets involves a wide range of aspects, including the rights and responsibilities of governments and the rights of cultures. In addition, our research suggests that the ever-evolving international legal system can improve its framework, which is relevant to preserving cultural treasures.

Keywords: Cultural Heritage, Destruction, UNESCO, International Law

The level of cultural growth has always been a strong indicator of the works and progress that humanity has produced, both at the start of time and throughout its existence. The determination of succeeding generations to safeguard, conserve, uphold, and advance the cultural inheritance passed down from generation to generation is mainly responsible for the ever-increasing cultural trajectory (Vrdoljak, 2024). In addition, a methodical and organized strategy for appreciating cultural heritage began with the Renaissance, which spanned the 15th and 16th centuries (Eberhardt & Pospisil, 2022). During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, particularly after the two world wars, there was a lot of systematic development and attention paid to the components of cultural heritage, the protection of cultural property, and the creation of international regulations governing cultural heritage, which caused significant losses (Spitra, 2020).

A report on the worldwide movement to establish norms for cultural heritage law follows. Our study offers a fresh perspective on cultural heritage law by cataloguing existing literature on the subject and presenting and analyzing the current international community's multilateral effort to protect cultural artifacts. In the second half of the twenty-first century, public international law has taken a more humane approach to protecting cultural resources globally. International human rights legislation has significantly impacted the criteria for cultural property to be legally protected (Ssenyonjo, 2017). In this new humanitarian order, people and the preservation of cultural heritage are interdependent. Individuals acquire rights and responsibilities concerning cultural heritage preservation in such a context since they are actors of international law (Rizzetto, 2023). Therefore, safeguarding cultural assets is a complex subject encompassing nations and people.

Literature Review

Cultural heritage is the legacy of tangible items and intangible characteristics passed down from previous generations (Lenzerini, 2011). This heritage includes both tangible and intangible components. Protecting it is necessary in order to preserve the history, culture, and identity of individuals and communities all over the world. Treaties, agreements, and protocols are all part of the international legal framework for preserving cultural heritage (Posner, 2007). These documents aim to preserve these priceless assets from dangers such as armed conflict, looting, and natural catastrophes.

While researching this subject, the first question to be discussed is, "What is cultural heritage?" Continuing the previous description, cultural legacy may consist of physical and immaterial items, such as buildings, artworks, and historical sites. To put it into concrete terms, it is often known as cultural property. This phrase was first established by UNESCO in 1954 in the 1954 Hague Convention, a treaty for protecting cultural property during armed conflict.

According to the treaty, museums and archives that house such collections are also recognized as cultural properties (Tsinopoulou, 2017). Intangible cultural heritage items, such as food, folk customs, and language, are less clearly measurable but no less essential to a people's or community's cultural existence. Both visible and intangible forms of history are worthy of protection because of people's importance to them (Lenzerini, 2011). Interestingly, they measure the worth by how much it is missing or how much of a hit it takes when it has gone. They consider this kind of loss to be "ruinous for cultural identity," impacting not only the affected communities but also "humanity as a whole" (Bulow, 2020).

Theft and violence against cultural property have deep historical origins, but the subject only really came to the forefront of contemporary awareness after WWII. During that war, the Nazis pillaged public and private art collections, destroying much of Europe's built environment. Some parts of the international community were particularly shocked by the latter, the apparent disappearance of highly regarded European artifacts. In his analysis of the destruction in Florence, architectural historian Nicholas Adams says. The excellent monuments of Italy represent, for many of us, "a kind of cultural patria [patrimony], and so it is understandable that we feel damage to them as damage to us" (Adams, 1993). The 1954 Hague Convention emerged due to the widespread belief that the world's artistic and cultural heritage needed more protection, especially among Westerners (Niglio & Lee, 2021).

This "international legislation to preserve cultural artifacts in times of war is still challenging to enforce effectively"; however, Evans demonstrates that this is insufficient (Evans, 2011). The protagonists believe that destroying the area, which might be seen as an architectural cleaning, can eliminate the last representatives of a foreign civilization and the people who live there. Adams regards attacks on cultural property, particularly architecture, as a tool used by potential perpetrators of genocide. Adams also expresses concern about enforcing the existing legal system (Adams, 1993). Robert Bevan, who elaborates on the idea in his book-length investigation of the role of architectural ruin in the erasure of culture, shares Adams's opinion (Bevan, 2007). The destruction of physical cultural artifacts, according to Bevan, is a prelude to more extensive genocidal plans.

Politicians worldwide agree with Bevan that culture is essential to who we are as a species. The killing of people and "such acts of destruction" are "part of the same global strategy, which I call 'cultural cleansing,' intended to destroy identities, tear apart social fabrics, and fuel hatred," according to former UNESCO Director-General (Bokova, 2015). It is worth noting that Bokova views assaults on cultural property as endangering global peace and security in addition to individuals and people. Thus, she implored the world's governments to acknowledge the importance of heritage and the seriousness of its plight. She also demanded that the Security Council and the ICC assert their authority in the cultural sphere more vigorously.

The frequency and severity of culturally specific attacks have skyrocketed after 2001, particularly in the Middle East, but increasingly beyond and in their evaluation of the threats to the historic heritage of the Middle East and its Roman and Parthian archaeological monuments, Blair Fowlkes-Childs and Michael Seymour of the Metropolitan Museum said that some of these sites are now undergoing modern-day devastation as well (Fowlkes-Childs, & Seymour, 2019). The continuous military wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, and Syria have been characterized by the widespread destruction, and in some cases, destruction, of significant architectural and sculptured landmarks. Unfortunately, this is often an unintended consequence of war, as was the situation with the Great Mosque of Aleppo in Syria, which was one of the worst victims of the civil war thus far. Sometimes, as with the Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan, the destruction is intentional. Fundamentalist Islamists burned these old statues to the ground because they represented heresy, as the area had a pre-Islamic history. Among politically motivated

NSAs, they are part of a growing tendency to use culturally significant artifacts as proxies in their confrontations with the West (Barfield, 2022).

As "one of the larger transnational markets in illegal goods," the theft and trafficking of art pieces has grown in popularity among NSAs in recent years. Research suggests that the so-called Islamic State (ISIL) earns a substantial amount of money from the sale of stolen artifacts. This money provides the Islamist organization with the means to fund its terrorist attacks (Blannin, 2017). What has the global community done in response to these dangers to cultural artifacts?

Two further UNESCO treaties on the preservation of cultural assets were adopted in 1970 and 1972 after the 1954 Hague Convention. Nevertheless, as we will see in the next section, none of the three is perfect and can serve as a foundation for cultural heritage conservation. The repeated ineffectiveness of these legal mechanisms to prevent the destruction of cultural property has been voiced by several critics, including UNESCO (Van-der-Auwera, 2013). The participation of belligerent NSAs, who do not see themselves as being bound by the laws of battle established by international law, is one reason why armed conflicts have changed after WWII, according to (Kila, 2013). The UNESCO agreements are already outdated due to the shifting dynamics of modern warfare and the fact that they were drafted with conventional interstate conflicts and mutually agreed-upon rules of engagement in mind. Another obstacle to the agreements' efficacy is the provision for "military necessity," which allows for the justification of the unfortunate but essential destruction of buildings and monuments during "necessary" combat operations (Schmitt & Schmitt, 2012).

On the other hand, not all legal tools meant to combat cultural offenses are failing. In 2016, the first fruit of Bokova's call for the ICC to use its jurisdiction was the conviction of Ahmad Al Faqi Al Mahdi for supervising the destruction of cultural property in Timbuktu, Mali. Legal expert Patty Gerstenblith argues that instances like Al Mahdi's build legal precedents safeguarding cultural heritage for decades to come (Gerstenblith, 2016). Along with other legal scholars, she delves further into the past, to the 1990s, when the ICTY found many people guilty of cultural property crimes in the former Yugoslavia. The need to preserve cultural heritage has been firmly established in customary law, perhaps due to ICTY judgments, and is now widely accepted as a general normative premise (Vrdoljak, 2013). Weiss and Connelly go beyond the present methods of preventing cultural heritage destruction by considering how the problem could be framed within the international responsibility norm to protect (Weiss & Connelly, 2019). This norm urges states to acknowledge their three-part duty to "prevent, react, and rebuild" when confronted with mass atrocities.

Thus, according to the individual who first used the phrase, genocide might include more than just the systematic killing of innocent people. It could refer to a variety of actions taken against a people in an attempt to eradicate their culture and way of life that undermine their feeling of self-worth, security, and identity. According to Luck, Lemkin had planned for the Genocide Convention to have an item denouncing attacks on cultural heritage (Luck, 2020); however, the Convention was almost derailed due to political bickering over the inclusion of this article, and it was finally removed. However, Luck thinks that maybe now is the moment to reconsider cultural genocide and embrace it as a valid notion for legislation. He concedes that there are challenges, the most significant of which is that "cultural genocide has never been defined, accepted, or codified by the world's governments," which makes it harder to use the term as a framework to prevent and punish cultural crimes on a global scale (Luck, 2020). It might be added to this list that the death of people takes precedence over the damage of property in the public mind, making the former seem less critical. Cultural asset protection efforts are on the rise across the globe, and the notion that we have a moral duty to do so is gaining traction.

Following this introductory chapter, further chapters examine the development of these initiatives from the early 1900s to the present day, assessing the impact of various protective regimes on the worldwide response to this ongoing issue.

Method

The research approach employed for this study was theoretical, and it included analyzing the problem based on international legal documents, constitutional provisions, and other statutory instruments. The research was conducted using a qualitative method that did not rely on empirical evidence. This method comprised doing an exhaustive review of the relevant literature. Utilizing this methodology enabled the discovery of gaps in the existing body of knowledge, which were then addressed, producing new insights. Papers such as encyclopedic legal dictionaries, reports, rules, regulations, policies, academic publications, government gazettes, and various international and domestic instruments are examples of authoritative papers in academic libraries.

The remaining sections of the article are organized as follows. Cultural Heritage is defined in the Section 2. While Section 3, discusses the specifics of how cultural heritage is handled under international law in terms of protection and preservation, both during times of war and peace. Section 4 presents the analysis of the legal framework for protecting cultural heritage. The last section concludes the study.

Meaning of cultural heritage

Cultural heritage is the passed-down knowledge and artifacts from one generation to the next, with the goals of preserving, interpreting, and using them for the benefit of everyone. Cultural legacy is best seen as having three parts: The term "cultural heritage" encompasses three types of assets: physical, immaterial, and natural; (i) Cultural artifacts that can be moved from one location to another, such as paintings, sculptures, coins, manuscripts, etc.; (ii) Cultural artifacts that cannot be moved, such as monuments, archaeological sites, etc.; and (iii) Cultural artifacts that can be seen underwater, such as sunken ships, underwater cities, and ruins (Nilson & Thorell, 2018). What communities, organizations, and even individuals may identify as part of their cultural heritage are the intangible aspects, such as knowledge and skills, tools, crafts, and cultural sites linked to them. Intangible cultural heritage also includes representations, expressions, and activities. Specifically, intangible cultural heritage encompasses written and visual artifacts, social behaviors, rituals, celebrations, and knowledge and practices related to traditional crafts, the cosmos, and the environment (Qiu et al., 2022). Any physical and biological artifacts that serve as natural landmarks are considered part of the natural heritage. Geological and physiographic features and habitats for plant and animal species are also part of it. Lastly, it encompasses all beautifully scenic or scientifically significant natural landscapes worldwide (Gordon, 2018).

Cultural Heritage and the Application of International Law

During a conflict, the world community first became aware of the need to safeguard its cultural commodities and establish international rules. This awareness dates back to the middle of the seventeenth century. In 1666, Sweden became the first European nation to pass legislation concerning the conservation of its national monuments (Brown, 2011). This law was the first legislative regulation to be enacted in a European nation. When the 19th century comes to a close, most other European nations will have followed suit and enacted laws to safeguard their archaeological and historical legacy. This will have occurred by the end of the last century. As the first effort to impose laws during a time of war to preserve cultural products, the "Lieber Code" was created in the United States in 1863 (Lovett, 2019). This code was the foundation for the Brussels Declaration in 1874, the first international codification. As a result of the response of Great Britain, however, it was never accepted (Yadong, 2020).

Throughout history, the philosophy of war has often included destroying, selling, or stealing works of art and monuments. As a kind of retribution against those defeated, the victors were repeatedly compelled to commit theft and, in many cases, destroy symbols of national and cultural significance (Prot, 2009). The "Lieber Code" and the Declaration of Brussels served as the foundation for establishing the first formal agreements, known as the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907 (Dowdeswell, 2016). These conventions, which were established to protect cultural products, were established. The protection of cultural products was never guaranteed, even though those particular regulations were finally implemented. The harm done to the world's cultural legacy during the two world wars is unimaginable. Many historical monuments and cultural items were also lost, and temples and other historical structures were destroyed (Wangkeo, 2003). The fire that broke out at the library also destroyed many books and manuscripts that were housed there.

When the world community realized that the legal restrictions that were in place at the time were not enough for the preservation of cultural heritage, they began a concerted effort to develop a protection system that was more effective on both the national and international levels. There has been a steady proliferation of international organizations like UNESCO, which is responsible for promoting cultural understanding, scientific research, and education within the framework of the UN (Butler, 2019). In addition to serving as a regulatory body to foster international cooperation, the foundation's primary objective is to make it a worldwide laboratory for exchanging ideas. The "Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict" was signed at a conference organized by UNESCO in the Netherlands in April and May 1954. It was the first time a concerted attempt was made to save cultural assets in the years after the war. As a consequence of the fact that it did not address the problem of illegally exporting cultural assets that were removed during armed conflict, the First Protocol was added to the agreements (Abtahi, 2017). A source of contention arose because the topic of "return of cultural property" was not mentioned in the wording of the Convention (Esterling, 2023).

The argument was undermined because the Convention already contained articles on the protection of cultural goods during peacetime (Articles 3 and 7 of the Convention) and military occupation (Articles 5 of the

Convention), which meant that returning stolen goods would have to wait until hostilities ended, even though the Convention only addressed the protection of cultural goods during times of armed conflict (Upadhyay & Rathee, 2020).

Analyzing The Protection of Cultural Heritage During Armed Conflict: A Legal Framework

Protocols I and II of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 address preserving cultural heritage during armed conflict. These protocols were revised in 1977 to reflect the ever-changing norms that govern armed conflict environments (Frulli, 2011). Protocol II addresses military conflicts that do not include other nations, whereas Protocol I focuses on those that do. Regarding cultural aims and territories, it is essential to highlight that Article 53 of Protocol I bans the use of historical monuments, works of art, or places of worship as weapons or targets in conflicts, as well as the threat of using them in such a manner (Muscat, 2020). These places of worship and historical monuments are considered part of peoples' spiritual or cultural heritage. It is far stricter than the responsibilities of the Hague Convention and the 1907 Hague Regulations. However, it has the same fundamental idea of protection as Article 1 of the 1954 Hague Convention (Dsche, 1999). This plan will always succeed, regardless of the gravity of the military situation. Warring parties must be parties to the 1954 Hague Convention and Additional Protocol I to plead military necessity. The cultural commodities not addressed by Art.53 are also subject to Art.52, which deals with protecting civil objectives. As a result, urban areas should not be targeted for assaults or reprisals; such actions should only be carried out against specific military objectives. The substance of Art.85, which establishes the deliberate destruction of sacred or artistic sites as a war crime, is, last but not least, significant. This rule is only relaxed when a cultural artifact is either directly related to military goals or is used in some way by the military (Stone, 2022). International courts are therefore made accessible as a possible avenue of appeal in the event of a breach of Protocol. As previously stated, non-international armed conflicts are covered under Protocol II of the 1977 Geneva Conventions; Article 16 explicitly addresses cultural matters. It stresses once again that no one may utilize other people's cultural or spiritual assets, such as historic monuments, artworks, or houses of worship, to further their military objectives (Harrison, 2010). Isolated and intermittent violent incidents and other forms of internal discontent are outside the purview of this Protocol. However, internal conflicts have taken on an international dimension, and the application of the Protocol in these circumstances has been controversial.

The contested articles of the protocols above have established a particular legal framework. This framework determines an evaluation criterion for protecting goods that make up people's cultural and spiritual heritage and a typological criterion for protecting goods that demand special treatment for historical monuments, artworks, and houses of worship (Lundahl, Lindblad, 2018). In order to qualify for this protection, cultural artifacts must be strongly associated with the subjective judgment of individual nations.

While not all international conventions address the preservation of cultural assets during times of war, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the "*International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) in 1966*" and other treaties with similar goals (Coomans, 2011). Cultural rights are integrally linked to human rights despite lacking direct cultural mention. After looting many cultural artifacts from conquered areas, efforts to curb the illicit international traffic of cultural commodities have expanded beyond the 1970 UNESCO Convention. The 1972 UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage supplied a list of World Heritage sites in jeopardy. (Training). Armed conflicts, whether they have already begun or are about to begin, pose one of the biggest threats to cultural and natural heritage investments. The "Reconstruction of Monuments Damaged by War" Declaration of Dresden, which took place in 1982, is another critical international document in this vein (Icomos. 1982). It is essential to note the Second Additional Protocol to the Hague Convention, which was approved on March 26, 1999. Cultural artifacts were often damaged or destroyed due to non-international wars that could not be resolved. Accordingly, it was generally agreed that current rules should be followed even in disputes that do not include foreign actors; furthermore, in times of emergency, cultural property should be transferred (UNESCO, 2019). Consequently, a legal framework for preserving cultural assets during times of peace has been established to complement the existing framework that encompasses their protection during times of war (Abtahi, 2017).

Protecting Cultural Heritage During Peacetime: A Legal Framework

Cultural heritage preservation was a top priority for the world community, even during periods of peace, when the dangers were just as significant as they were during times of conflict. Even when the world is at peace, issues may emerge, such as deteriorating environmental conditions, climate change, the illicit trade of cultural products, and terrorist attacks.

Conventions aimed at protecting cultural assets globally were established after the establishment of UNESCO. Cultural protection was based on two UNESCO conventions: the “*International Convention on the Prohibition and Prevention of the Illicit Import, Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970)*” and the “*International UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972)*” (Jagielska-Burduk et al., 2021). Two other treaties, one on undersea heritage (signed in 2001) and the other on cultural diversity (signed in 2005), have recently been added to this framework on a similar footing with the 2003 Convention on the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage. This provides fresh ideas and a foundation for a more comprehensive and equitable understanding of humankind's cultural legacy.

Notable among them is the 2003 UNESCO Declaration, which all UNESCO Member States agreed upon without exception, condemning the deliberate destruction of cultural heritage. In addition, it is not a definitive legal instrument that binds nations internationally. The Member States reaffirm their commitment to fight against the deliberate destruction of cultural assets at all times, regardless of conflict, in this 2003 Declaration (Schmalenbach, 2016). Respect for customary international law, international treaties, and UNESCO guidelines is demanded of governments during times of conflict, as is the strong suggestion that states adhere to all international recommendations and agreements while at peace (Stone, 2022). Nevertheless, acknowledging the responsibility of both states and people about the loss of cultural heritage is a crucial aspect of this Declaration: Intentional destruction of cultural heritage is the duty of states. In contrast, criminal action involving cultural heritage is the responsibility of individuals (Vrdoljak, 2022). Every State must ensure that its internal norms of law align with international obligations by international law and states' participation in international transactions.

In particular, regulatory or legislative actions should be implemented to safeguard cultural heritage components, whether in their entirety or separately. As a result, defining cultural products legally is both a responsibility and a right of each State (Spitra, 2020). International treaties impose the duty, and cultural property inside its borders provides the right. Furthermore, every nation must take measures to protect its cultural assets from deterioration, and every State recognizes this as a fundamental concept. Additional responsibility includes protecting cultural variety, which provides for all cultures. Relevant resolutions passed by the United Nations General Assembly have brought this issue to the forefront because of its perceived importance (Rasche & Kell, 2010). There will be criminal and administrative consequences for states that do not uphold their international obligations to cultural heritage. The need to establish worldwide standards for preserving cultural assets during peace is readily ostensible. Even though much work has been done in this area, there is space for improvement since protecting cultural heritage is becoming more pressing, and new issues are cropping up (Nocca, 2017).

Cultural Heritage Management During Socio-Political Crisis

Currently, nations have challenges stemming from their varied and multifaceted cultural resources even as they display symptoms of or are plagued by social and political crises. In the worst-case scenario, a country's instability manifests as a civil war, threatening and destroying cultural assets. This is because when these nations shut their borders and isolate themselves, it becomes more challenging to communicate with state authorities about risk assessment and cultural heritage preservation (Nilson, Thorell, 2018). Additionally, international organizations are unable to lend their assistance to this cause. Cultural heritage preservation, however, may seem like a minor concern when people are talking about people's lives that are at risk (Rehman & Ishak, 2022).

Even members of the own people may be inclined to vandalize and plunder cultural artifacts during social and political unrest. Additionally, it should be mentioned that when a nation is experiencing a socio-political crisis, diplomatic or political measures cannot be used to safeguard its cultural legacy (Shehade, Fouseki, 2016). Subject to regional and national constraints, information sharing can only occur between specialists. One way to speed up the establishment of communication channels is to form a local network of specialists who can evaluate the worth of cultural assets.

Likewise, UNESCO and other foreign organizations may bypass civilian governments and instead work with local specialists to improve communication. When religiously motivated extremists target cultural assets, any political response would be counterproductive and raise the danger of assault even higher. However, local specialists would be better equipped to handle the situation, find the culprits, attempt solutions, and speed up rescuing cultural riches at risk of extinction (Wangkeo, 2003).

In order to effectively address challenges relating to cultural asset conservation, public knowledge is crucial. An alternative to administrative procedures that might help avoid and repair the issue is organizing social events by cultural heritage specialists (Muscat, 2020). This is because specialists in cultural heritage may plan public events to

increase awareness. As a result of their extensive training, education, and experience, they can also assess risks and provide suitable mitigation strategies quickly. Moreover, they can engage with international organizations and supply up-to-date information since they are either involved with them or understand how they operate.

Cultural resources are particularly vulnerable during social and political unrest caused by popular resistance to governments. The argument for protecting cultural heritage and the many dimensions and uses of this value are primarily unexplored. Cultural heritage conservation concerns take a back seat to political concerns due to the volatility of governments (Meskell et al., 2015). A common misunderstanding is that people may actively oppose governments by destroying cultural treasures. Furthermore, regimes see the structure of international organizations as untrustworthy, limiting the actions these groups may take during times of crisis. This is on top of the fact that national committees of these organizations are crippled by the instability that already exists. Political and social unrest in several African and Middle Eastern nations in the last several decades has devastated the cultural heritage of those nations (Halpern, 2015). Thus, it is logical to assume that every time such a crisis happens or is feared to happen, it endangers various resources of that nation's cultural legacy.

Conclusion

A new era in the worldwide framework for protecting cultural property within the bounds of public international law began in the second half of this century. Considering individuals and communities ensures that the protected characteristics are not just a passing fad. Even though it is constantly changing, public international law is devoted to the idea that governments should play a leading role in protecting cultural property inside their boundaries. One of its leading objectives is emphasizing the importance of people in the worldwide movement to preserve cultural artifacts. There are specific international responsibilities that governments still need to fulfill. International human rights legislation has developed and expanded Cultural artifact preservation laws.

The preservation of cultural artifacts and the well-being of individuals are interdependent in this new humanitarian order. When people take part in enforcing international law, they acquire both rights and responsibilities for preserving cultural artifacts. Human considerations in no way limit the power of states; instead, they impose new safeguarding duties stemming from humanitarian and human rights treaties. It is also important to note that regional agreements are developed due to member nations' actions at the regional level, particularly in Africa, the United Nations, and Europe. Conventions at the regional level that are in complete harmony with UNESCO's global protection requirements supplement the current cooperation among member states or govern certain elements that improve cultural asset conservation. UNESCO is the primary forum for evaluating whether or not member states conform to international protection standards and the primary processing mechanism for international protection standards. Regrettably, UNESCO has been referred to as a "giant with clay feet" owing to the lack of sanctions for cultural protection.

As established by international law, the complex issue of cultural heritage preservation affects states and people, who are both obligated and entitled to the protection of cultural assets. The challenge of cultural heritage preservation affects communities as well as individuals. The world has understood that countries, international organizations, and individuals working within them must work together to create a workable system to protect cultural assets. Although substantial obstacles exist in enforcement, illegal trafficking, and resolving emergent concerns, the international legal framework for preserving cultural assets is solid. To effectively protect cultural assets, it is necessary to maintain international collaboration, strengthen national legislation, and incorporate recently developed technology. Adapting to ever-changing dangers and ensuring the effective use of current legal instruments should be the primary focus of future efforts.

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