1. Scope of Report

This report presents highlights of the work of the current Board for the duration of their election (August 2020 – May 2023), and then presents a specific focus on the most recent year of work (May 2022 – May 2023).

2. Members of the Board (and Bureau) August 2020-May 2023

Peter G Stone, President (also on the Bureau)

Elected members

Kidong Bae (South Korea) (Vice-President, also on the Bureau)
Klaus Weschenfelder (Germany) (Treasurer, also on the Bureau)
Hamady Gaye (Senegal)
Lidia Klupsz (Poland)

Representatives of the founding organisations

ICA Emilie Leumas
ICOMOS Bijan Rouhani
ICOM Peter Keller (often represented by Sophie Delepierre) (Founding organisation representative on the Bureau)

IFLA Gerald Leitner represented IFLA until he stepped down in March 2022: at the time of this report, IFLA is represented by Claire McGuire for the interim until a new representative is named.

A Bureau or Board meeting is held every month to discuss updates on work, files, and ongoing situations, and to decide on actions and/or activities to be implemented.

3. The Secretariat

3.1.1 The Blue Shield Board continues to be supported by 1.5 staff employed by Newcastle University (UK) as part of the UNESCO Chair in Cultural Property Protection & Peace (CPP&P) held by Professor Peter Stone. These staff (Dr Emma Cunliffe, full time post, appointed in November 2017 and Dr Michael Delacruz, 0.5 post, appointed in January 2021) are known as ‘the Secretariat’ (email: blueshield.international@theblueshield.org). Funding for both posts is currently secure until 31 December 2023, and Newcastle University is currently applying to UNESCO to renew the UNESCO Chair for a further 4 years.
4. **Website and Social Media**

   - Website: [https://theblueshield.org/](https://theblueshield.org/). The website received about 32000 visits a year.
   - Twitter: @BlueShield_Int (3,166 followers, up from 2,767 in May 2022)
   - Facebook: [Blue Shield International](https://www.facebook.com/InternationalBlueShield/) (2,200 followers)
   - Linked In: [The Blue Shield](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/4666157/) (1,040 members: membership is public)

We particularly thank a Communications volunteer, Jessica Barry, to whom we are very grateful.

5. **Highlights 2020 – 2023**

   Since the election of the new Board in August 2020, the Blue Shield Movement has gone from strength to strength. Highlights of the Board’s work include:

   5.1 **Internationally Valued Work**

   - **Increasing recognition of our military training in CPP and human security**, with the launch of a multi-national CPP course at the United Nations Training School Ireland (UNTSI); training for the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL; and with numerous branches of NATO, including multi-year support for exercises including Loyal Leda, Steadfast Leda, Steadfast Jackal, Steadfast Jupiter, and support for training for the 1st cultural property protection German-Netherlands Corps validation exercise, NRDC-Italy, various AARRCADE events; URBAN LION, as well Human Security training organised by SHAPE and NATO’s Allied Land Command (LANDCOM), through Multinational Corps South-East (MNC-SE).


   - **Monitoring and support for situations of conflict and disaster, remotely and in person**, including working to secure the safety of heritage experts and collections in Afghanistan, and field visits to Ukraine, statements on the situation calling on all parties to respect IHL, and recommending a list of cultural property to be put under Enhanced Protection to the Committee for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, as is Blue Shield’s right under Article 11(3) of the 1954 Hague Convention Second Protocol (1999).

   - **Recognition of our illicit trafficking training**, for example thorough regular support for the Transnational Threats Department of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Scenario-based Workshops on the Illicit Trafficking in Cultural Property, and extensive support offered by the Blue Shield Countering Trafficking Working Group.

   - **The promotion of safeguarding measures** across Europe in line with the 1954 Hague Convention: in 2002 the President visited Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Romania as the guest of the respective national commissions for UNESCO.
- **Co-hosted Expert Stakeholder Workshop: Cultural Property Protection: Global Capacity and Financing**, in collaboration with Dr Fred Rosen of the Nordic Centre for Cultural Heritage and Armed Conflict.¹

- BSI was honoured to receive an award and letter of thanks from the Commander of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) for our support to LAF for the protection of damaged historic buildings following the Beirut explosion in August 2020. The award, an inscribed plaque, was presented to BSI by General Sami Houyek, Head of the Beirut Forward Emergency Response, and given to Joanne Farchakh Bajjaly, of the Lebanese National Committee of the Blue Shield, on behalf of BSI. In his letter of thanks, General Aoun, Commander of the Lebanese Armed Forces, expressed: “sincere acknowledgment and gratitude for your kind initiative of providing materials and tools to the Lebanese Armed Forces to enable the securing of the palace housing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its contents. Your initiative is highly valued by the Lebanese Army Command for the cooperation it represents with Lebanon in general, and with the Lebanese Armed Forces in particular, after the Beirut blast.”²


- **Regular awareness raising** with over 40 talks and presentations at conferences and workshops, most of which were invited, in 24 countries.

- **Undertaking, supporting, and publishing ground-breaking research and policy-development** into heritage destruction and protection.

### 5.2 Partnerships and Collaborations

- Developing wide-ranging collaborative working relations with a large range of partners, e.g., the ICRC, NATO, UNESCO, the UN Peacekeeping Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), UNESCO Regional Offices, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the Carabinieri, the Smithsonian Cultural Resources Initiative, Cultural Emergency Response, and the Antiquities Coalition.

- These are reflected in the signing of an:
  - **MoU with Biladi**, a Lebanese heritage NGO, and **Blue Shield Lebanon**, in November 2021, building on the collaborative heritage protection work conducted following the explosion in Beirut on 4th August 2020;
  - **MoU with Cultural Emergency Response (CER) and the Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative (SCRI)** in November 2022. Our first training course is already in development;
  - **Action Plan between Blue Shield and NATO’s Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE)** in March 2023, which establishes that Blue Shield will provide consultative support and expertise to help NATO’s progressive incorporation of CPP into its military planning and operations and with the design and drafting of NATO’s emerging CPP Policy, as well as specifying exercise support, building on the Letter of Intent signed in 2020;

² [https://theblueshield.org/laf-thanks-bsi-for-its-support-in-beirut/](https://theblueshield.org/laf-thanks-bsi-for-its-support-in-beirut/)
³ [https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000380180?1=null&queryId=N-EXPLORE-df353bff-52ba-4048-8a37-6713144d5be3](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000380180?1=null&queryId=N-EXPLORE-df353bff-52ba-4048-8a37-6713144d5be3)
And the development of a **Framework Agreement with UNESCO** (currently in draft).

- **Deepening collaboration with the Transnational Threats Department of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).** Following support for their training workshops, BSI is developing new programmes of work looking at security threats in the OSCE’s geographic remit relating to CPP.

- **Humanitarian collaboration** has continued to increase with ongoing meetings with the ICRC, UNOCHA and other key humanitarian stakeholders (see below). In addition, work is ongoing regarding a CPP training course for the humanitarian sector (planned for completion in summer 2023). For this we must particularly thank Jennifer Price Jones for her support.

- **Representation** at the European Commission/DG CONNECT Digital Heritage and Europa Nostra.

### 5.3 Strengthening of the Blue Shield Movement

- **Strong collaboration and communication established with National Committees**, with a newsletter, website updates, regular monthly meetings, and support for national work, like the Blue Shield Germany project supporting the development of Blue Shield National Committees in Africa: it resulted in the publication of a bi-lingual brochure on their work[^4].

- **Growing our National Committees network**, with 31 National Committees across all inhabited continents, with new committees approved in Turkey, Mali, Niger, Slovakia, Croatia, and 8 more under construction (see more about the work of the Accreditation Committee in para. 6.1.1).

- **Establishment of a system of Annual Reporting** and **Delivery of a National Committee Training Course**, which brings all national committees to a common level of knowledge and understanding of the Blue Shield, general cultural property protection (CPP), and the basics of international law. Feedback has been positive: one participant said “A fabulous resource; will go back to it”. These demonstrate clearly to potential funders that we are a coherent international organisation, with a specific niche, worthy of investment.

- **The establishment of a Working Group on Countering Trafficking of Cultural Objects**, chaired (with thanks) by Professor Patty Gerstenblith of USCBS.

- **A successful 25th Anniversary conference**, attended by an estimated 166 people over the two days from all round the world[^5], along with panel discussions and video interviews with our founders and a social media campaign.

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[^5]: Conference videos and transcript are available online [https://theblueshield.org/blue-shield-25th-anniversary-conference-online/](https://theblueshield.org/blue-shield-25th-anniversary-conference-online/)
6. 2022 – 2023 Blue Shield Board and Secretariat Activity

6.1 Blue Shield International Working Groups

6.1.1 Accreditation Committee: The Accreditation Committee, chaired by Sophie Delepierre of ICOM and also composed of Emma Cunliffe and Klaus Weschenfelder, has met regularly and reported the results of its work to the Board and Bureau on a monthly basis. All decisions made by the Accreditation Committee have been fully endorsed by the Board.

Since May 2022, a new national committee has been established in Croatia – welcome and congratulations! Blue Shield now has 31 committees around the world.

[Image: Blue Shield Croatia]

https://theblueshield.org/a-blue-shield-national-committee-for-croatia/

The Accreditation Committee are currently supporting eight committees under construction (five in Europe, two in Africa, and one in Canada), and those expressing interest around the world (including in Asia and South America). The Committee works with those creating new committees around the world to help them learn about the mission of the Blue Shield and enable them to put it into practice in their country. As well as advice and support to prospective committees, work includes arranging contacts across national heritage sectors, translation of documents into national languages (and back into English), helping develop legal statutes, and reviewing documentation to meet the standards and goals of the Blue Shield movement, in line with Accreditation Process⁶.

It has not yet been possible for the Board to resolve the issues with the Articles of Association that prevent legal recognition of regional committees, as no specific Article currently allows for their creation. However, the Blue Shield Pacifica Regional Committee is accredited by Blue Shield, and the Board are working to revise the Articles of Association to enable their legal recognition. In addition, communication in languages other than English (such as French for French-speaking African countries) is not technically possible under the current Articles, and this will also be reviewed when the Articles are revised to enable greater participation round the world.

6.1.2 Working Group on Countering Trafficking of Cultural Objects: The Board formally thank the Working Group for all their work over the year, both in their reports and of a confidential nature. We have established a web portal for their work which we will populate with

⁶ https://theblueshield.org/get-involved/create-a-national-committee/
6.1.3 **Emergency Response Working Group:** The Board has also approved the creation of an Emergency Response Working Group to build on the success and lessons learned in Beirut. This is in development.

6.2 **General Activity**

6.2.1 The **2022 Year in Review** is available on the BSI website.

6.2.2 **BSI signs MOU with CER and SCRI:** On 2 November, Peter Stone was delighted to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with Cultural Emergency Response (CER) and the Smithsonian’s Cultural Rescue Initiative (SCRI). Under the MoU the three organisations plan to cooperate on the delivery of new training programmes regarding the protection of heritage in the event of armed conflict or following natural or human-caused disasters.

6.2.3 **Monitor situations of conflict and disaster:** With its national committees and other areas where we have no national committee, the Board has continued to monitor the conflict situations in Nagorno-Karabakh, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, and Ukraine, and the flooding across Europe and Australia, the hurricanes in Mozambique, and the Pacific, and the wildfires across Greece, Turkey, the UK, and elsewhere, as well the earthquake in Syria and Turkey. We express our deepest sympathies to those and their families who are affected. The President and Secretariat have been directly involved in trying to support heritage professionals as well as protecting cultural property in affected areas. By its nature, much of this work must remain confidential.

With specific reference to Ukraine,

a) BSI released a one year on statement on the situation.

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Updates: [https://theblueshield.org/what-we-do/countering-trafficking/](https://theblueshield.org/what-we-do/countering-trafficking/)

b) BSI continues to support Ukrainian authorities, together with UNESCO and other international organisations, in several areas relating to the protection of cultural property in partnership with the Ukrainian Ministry of Culture and Information. At the request of Ukrainian authorities, we have continued to provide support and participate in work relating, in particular, to the promotion and implementation of international humanitarian law, specifically the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two Protocols (1954/1999).

c) BSI has visited Ukraine twice. The first visit\(^{10}\) aimed to evaluate the effects of the war on Ukraine’s cultural sector. Dr Delacruz met with a wide number of Ukrainians working on heritage protection and visited sites in Kyiv, Odesa, and Kherson oblasts (regions) to deepen BSI’s awareness and understanding of the damage and looting of cultural heritage that has occurred during the current conflict, assess the impact on affected communities and institutions, and provide recommendations to the Ukrainian authorities for improving capability to document such occurrences and safeguard at-risk heritage.

Discussing the looting of the Kherson Art Museum with Alina Dotsenko, Director of the Kherson Art Museum in Ukraine, November 2022. © BSI 2022

Building on this, the second visit\(^{11}\) included a series of site visits that focused on evaluating the barriers and challenges to effective implementation of the 1954 Hague Convention during the conflict, and the documentation of information related to possible incidents of international heritage crime, as well as evaluating methodologies linking remote satellite imagery analysis and on-site assessment of damaged cultural heritage sites, and investigation of the problem of illicit trafficking.


\(^{11}\) [https://theblueshield.org/bsi-returns-to-ukraine/](https://theblueshield.org/bsi-returns-to-ukraine/)
of Ukrainian cultural heritage. To support the protection of heritage and implementation of IHL, BSI met with representatives from multiple sectors across Ukraine.

d) Additional work has included supporting the creation of a national military cultural property protection capability/unit, and for the Ukrainian National Committee under Construction.

e) The President continues to present to, and work with, staff from the Permanent Delegations to UNESCO on cultural property protection.

f) Blue Shield International continues to support the UNESCO Expert Group for the Safeguarding of Ukraine’s Cultural Heritage, and is coordinating with ICOMOS, ICOM, IFLA, and ICA to share information from our national committees.

g) Blue Shield International also provided guidance on emergency support which is available in English and Ukrainian on BSI’s website\(^{12}\).

### 6.2.4 OSCE Heritage Crime Training

The Transnational Threats Department of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and partners have run two Scenario-based Workshops on the Illicit Trafficking in Cultural Property. The workshops were designed to familiarise regional customs, border, law enforcement, and heritage professionals with perspectives from a wide variety of disciplines involved in combatting heritage crime. Dr Delacruz and Fionnuala Rodgers (Chair of Blue Shield UK) represented BSI\(^ {13} \). They highlighted the broader framework of the 1954 Hague Convention and other international illicit trafficking legislation, and their role in supporting the seizure and forfeiture of cultural property illegally expropriated from conflict areas, and the Convention’s integration with European and national law as a potential enforcement tool.

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6.2.5 **Safeguarding support continues:** In April 2022, the President visited Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania as the guest of the respective national commissions for UNESCO\(^\text{14}\). He followed this with a visit to Romania\(^\text{15}\) in September 2022, where he presented on the responsibilities and opportunities provided by international law for the protection of heritage during armed conflict (focussing on the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two Protocols but referring also to other international conventions and instruments) and on the work of the Blue Shield Movement.

![Blue Shield President, Professor Stone, speaks to representatives of the Romanian inter-ministerial Working Group on CPP at the Chancellery of the Prime Minister, 8 September 2022 © National Heritage Institute](image-url)

6.2.6 **Humanitarian collaboration** has continued to increase with ongoing meetings with the ICRC, UNOCHA and other key humanitarian stakeholders (see below). In addition, work is ongoing regarding a CPP training course for the humanitarian sector (planned for completion in summer 2023). For this we must particularly thank Jennifer Price Jones for her support. BSI is also excited to have supported her ground-breaking new research in this area, which will be published this summer\(^\text{16}\): *Heritage Destruction from a Humanitarian Perspective*, Jennifer

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\(^{14}\) https://theblueshield.org/planning-for-cultural-property-protection-in-peace/

\(^{15}\) https://theblueshield.org/peacetime-cpp-planning-continues/

6.2.7 **Support to Guatemala:** Following the cultural heritage subject matter expertise exchange between the U.S. military and the Honduran Army in early 2022\(^{17}\), BSI Secretariat visited Guatemala\(^{18}\) in August 2022 to explore cultural heritage protection. Dr Delacruz held a series of engagements with key stakeholders discuss the challenges to cultural heritage protection in the country and to explore the possibilities for broader regional cooperation in training of heritage professionals and sharing of best practices.

Dr Delacruz with staff and invigilators at the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Tikal, Guatemala. © BSI 2022

6.2.8 **Digital Heritage:** Anna Puhr, of Blue Shield Austria, is the Blue Shield representative to the European Commission/DG CONNECT invited Blue Shield International with other pan-European and international organisations active or interested in digital cultural heritage.

6.2.9 **Europa Nostra:** Susann Harder, of Blue Shield Germany, is the Blue Shield representative to Europa Nostra.

6.3 **Military Support**

6.3.1 Over ten years of hard work and increasing cooperation between Blue Shield International and NATO bore additional fruit in March 2023 as Professor Peter Stone signed off on an Action Plan between Blue Shield and NATO’s Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe

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\(^{17}\) [https://theblueshield.org/cpp-expertise-exchange-with-the-honduran-army/](https://theblueshield.org/cpp-expertise-exchange-with-the-honduran-army/)

As well as identifying specific exercises and training in which Blue Shield staff will introduce CPP issues, the Plan establishes that Blue Shield will provide consultative support and expertise to help NATO’s progressive incorporation of CPP into its military planning and operations and with the design and drafting of NATO’s emerging CPP Policy. The Action Plan outlines how the two organisations will work together over the next three years and builds on the Letter of Intent signed between Blue Shield and SHAPE in June 2020.

6.3.2 BSI has supported several NATO training events in the last year, including training for the 1st cultural property protection German-Netherlands Corps validation exercise, NRDC-Italy, SME support for URBAN LION, STEADFAST LEDA 2022, and STEADFAST JACKAL 2022, as well as Human Security training organised by Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) and NATO’s Allied Land Command (LANDCOM), through Multinational Corps South-East (MNC-SE), at Land Forces Academy in Sibiu.

6.3.3 In line with the Action Plan, the Secretariat will continue to support NATO in a variety of exercises in 2023. The Secretariat has been requested by SHAPE J9 to support NATO Exercises STEADFAST JACKAL 2023 and STEADFAST JUPITER 2023, as well as at least two other training events.

6.3.4 In partnership with BS Ireland, BSI co-organised the first multi-national CPP training course for personnel in peacekeeping missions at the United Nations Training School Ireland (UNTSI) in the Curragh from the 14th – 17th February 2022. A second iteration is planned for later in 2023.

6.3.5 BSI also supported the Command and Staff College of the German Armed Forces and Engagement Global at the 2022 Coping with Culture Conference, from 5 to 7 October 2022 at the Civil-Military Cooperation Center of Excellence, in The Hague. Blue Shield International and partners, Cpt Ankie Peterson of the Dutch Army and Dr Tobias Strahl of Traversals, ran a workshop that was open to heritage professionals and armed forces, Including mapped and unmapped heritage in military planning: navigating the landscape. The workshop assisted delegates to consider the difficulties in including mapped and unmapped heritage of international, national, and local significance in operational military planning, including an introduction to Traversals’ Intelligence Platform.

6.4 Contributions to workshops and conferences

6.4.1 BSI was invited to attend the first conference of the Ministers of Culture of the Euro-Mediterranean region, which took place in Naples from the 16th-17th June, organised by the Italian Ministero della Cultura (MIC). Delegations from across the Euro-Mediterranean region attended the event which focused on ‘cultural diplomacy in a strategic region for global balance’. Dr Emma Cunliffe attended on behalf of BSI, speaking on the high-level

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20 https://theblueshield.org/bsi-support-nato-cpp-training/
22 https://theblueshield.org/bsi-attends-ministerial-conference-on-culture-in-naples/
expert discussion panel “Peace and Security. Joint response mechanisms and regional coordinated action to safeguard cultural heritage in disasters and crisis scenarios”. The panel explored emergency-response mechanisms and joint coordinated action for the protection and recovery of culture and cultural heritage from damage generated by disasters, conflicts and crises in the Euro-Mediterranean region. The two-day conference ended with the signing of a joint Declaration to launch a “Naples Process” for cultural collaboration in the Mediterranean and to enhance culture as a common good of the Euro-Mediterranean region.

BSI at the Conference of the Ministers of Culture of the Euro-Mediterranean region, Naples, 17 July 2022 ©BSI

6.4.2 Since the last report, the President and Secretariat have given the following conference presentations: In July 2022, BSI President Professor Peter Stone presented at the 9th World Archaeological Congress in Prague on the work of the Blue Shield Movement, and at an international Ministerial meeting on protecting religious heritage, held in the UK’s House of Lords. He spoke on the work of the Blue Shield Movement and the need to prepare for the worst in peacetime at the annual conference of the Finnish Section of the Nordic Conservators Association (October 2022). He spoke in Berlin at the international conference ‘50 Years World Heritage Convention, Times of Peace, Conflict and War’, organised by the Institute of Heritage Studies. Peter drew attention in his presentation, “World Heritage Sites: Targets in conflict? Ambassadors for peace?” to how CPP is crucial for helping to build “heathy, peaceful, stable, sustainable communities” (November 2022). By the middle of November, the President was in South Korea for a conference on ‘Heritage Interpretation in Armed Conflict’, organised by the International Centre for the Interpretation and Presentation of World Heritage Sites (WHIPIC). Peter also gave the keynote address at the opening of the Office of Cultural Heritage of the Barcelona Provincial Council’s XXXIV
Meeting of the Local Museums Network (Nov 2022). The focus of the 2022 meeting was ‘Museums in the face of conflicts and humanitarian crises’. He was the guest speaker in Newcastle University’s Discover series focusing, in this edition of the programme, on: ‘Protecting Cultural Heritage During Armed Conflict’. In December 2022 he was part of a panel discussing Art and War at the annual meeting of the New York State Bar Association. This panel was voted the best panel of the conference and so was repeated virtually for a wider audience in February 2023. Also, in February he presented to the Jouhouzia training programme in Lebanon for members of the heritage, military, and humanitarian sectors on Blue Shield International’s role in safeguarding Heritage. In March 2023 he presented on the importance of CPP and problems facing a small, new, international NGO at the Future of Education, Science, and Culture International Organizations Forum, organised by the Arab League Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization and hosted by the Saudi National Commission for Education, Culture and Science.

6.4.3 BSI supported the CPP experts meeting and exhibition ‘Culture in Armed Conflict’ at NATO HQ (November 2022), and the NATO conference ‘Cultural Property Protection and NATO: Experiences, Practices and Trends’. The two-day event was organised by the Office of the Secretary General’s Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security. BSI led a panel discussion of senior military and heritage experts to explore understanding of the importance of CPP in all NATO-led missions, operations and activities on day one, and a closed workshop on day two to look at what can be learned from best practice.

6.4.4 Emma Cunliffe presented at the conference The Disasters of War. Why Save Culture at the invitation of Società Italiana per la Protezione dei Beni Culturali (SIPBC – The Italian Society for the Protection of Cultural Heritage) (September 2022); at “Architectural Monuments in Conflicts and Disasters. Prevention / Intervention / Recovery” organised by the German ICOMOS National Committee, Germany National Commission of UNESCO, German Archaeology Institute and Blue Shield Germany (November 2022), and Libraires in the Time of War, at Uppsala University Sweden at the invitation of IFLA Rare Books and Special Collections and CERL (March 2023).


6.5 Blue Shield International Organisational Activity

6.5.1 Establish Blue Shield. We have continued in our work to establish Blue Shield as a standardised, efficient, and critically, fundable, international organisation and now have 31 active national committees.

We also now have a bank account with the Dutch Bank Tridos (confirmed April 2023): details will shortly be circulated to national committees and donation information updated on the

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23 https://theblueshield.org/a-busy-month-for-bsis-president/
24 Video available online: https://theblueshield.org/cpp-must-be-a-peacetime-activity/
6.5.2 **Fundraising and Establishment of a Central Office:** The most pressing issue for the Board continues to be the establishment of a small central office. While the Board has set the agenda for the Movement it has only really been possible to deliver most of the activity through the Secretariat provided by the UNESCO Chair team at Newcastle University. Much of our developing work with the humanitarian sector has been through the *pro bono* work of Jennifer Price-Jones and we again thank her for all of her hard work, while Fionnuala Rogers, Chair of the UKBS, has provided a huge amount of confidential *pro bono* support to the President on matters particularly relating to Afghanistan and Ukraine. However, in the future the Blue Shield cannot continue to rely on the good will of one university and *pro bono* work of supportive individuals. The President and Secretariat have met a number of individuals and organisations over the last 12 months to fundraise for both project and operational costs for BSI.

6.5.3 **Revision of the Articles of Association:** Revised AoA will, we hope, be presented to the 2024 General Assembly.

6.5.4 **Virtual General Assembly:** A virtual General Assembly was held in 2022, and is available with minutes online.

[Participants at the 2022 General Assembly]

6.5.5 **Continued ICRC Dialogue:** The President met with representatives of the ICRC in 2022 to develop closer collaboration. Following his visit to Ukraine, Dr Michael Delacruz met with representatives with the ICRC Humanitarian Law Advisory Team to share observations and assessments of the situation in Ukraine. The discussion focussed on international humanitarian law (IHL) including the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their 1977 Additional Protocols, and the 1954 Hague Conventions for the Protection of Cultural Property in the

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Event of Armed Conflict and its two Protocols (1954/1999). The parties also discussed ways to further cooperation between BSI and ICRC with respect to potential violations of IHL in relation to cultural heritage.

6.6 BSI and National Committees

6.6.1 Annual Plans and Reports: BSI has received 2022 Annual Reports and 2023 Strategic (Action) Plans from most National Committees; we are working with the remaining committees on these.

6.6.2 Support for National Committee projects: In May 2023, BSI was excited to support the planning and implementation of the final training event in the project “Planning for the Safeguarding of the Cultural Heritage of Georgia” organised by the Georgian National Committee of the Blue Shield and generously funded by the ALIPH Foundation. From 17-20 May 2022, over 40 people were introduced to the laws surrounding heritage protection in conflict, with particular focus on the obligations of the 1954 Hague Convention in both peace and conflict, and their implementation in Georgia. They worked through a fictional crisis ultimately resulted in a government order to evacuate the museum, and participants spent the last two days at the Gori Museum, where they split into groups to plan, and then to evacuate, a museum in an emergency.

Participants in the theoretical and practical course, “Protection of Cultural Heritage during the Armed Conflict” organised by Blue Shield Georgia and supported by Blue Shield International, 17-20 May 2022 © BSI / BS Georgia.

6.6.3 National Committee Presentations are regularly delivered at the monthly informal meetings of national committees: the schedule is available online to sign up, and to see who is speaking, and all talks are available online.

6.6.4 National Committee Training Course: The third and final block of the National Committee Training Course was published in Spring 2023. In total the course contains over 15 hours of videos and additional reading and quizzes. Videos are recorded and captioned in English but with subtitles and written transcripts available in French, Spanish, and Arabic. Feedback has been consistently positive for blocks one and two, and it is hoped block 3 is similarly well received. Videos are available offline by contacting the Secretariat — however, these will not be subtitled.

Professor Peter G Stone, President, Blue Shield
26 April 2024.

29 https://1drv.ms/x/s!AoZ5HUwVa1rx1Gj2FXsmT2UMZgh-?e=4Qgllg
30 https://theblueshield.org/what-we-do/national-committee-activities/
31 https://canvas.instructure.com/enroll/H93F3P

Please contact Emma Cunliffe at blueshield.international@theblueshield.org for joining instructions in English, French, Spanish, and Arabic.