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# Blue Shield - Illegal Trafficking Working Group

## Report

01 June 2022 – 01 June 2023

### 1. Membership

The Working Group (WG) is currently composed of the following individuals:

Neil Brodie (Blue Shield UK)

Joanne Farchakh-Bajjal (Blue Shield Lebanon, committee in formation)

Patty Gerstenblith (Blue Shield USA - USCBS) (WG Chair)

Eleni Korka (Blue Shield Greece)

Fionnuala Rogers (Blue Shield UK)

### 2. Report on Activities

The activities of the WG have focused on: -

#### 2.1 Support to Law Enforcement

- Members of the WG have continued to advise the law enforcement in their various countries, including the UK Metropolitan Police Art and Antiques Squad in London, in the Netherlands, to the Carabinieri, and in the United States on live investigations and prosecutions, acting as a source of referrals, providing expert opinions, and co-ordination with experts and countries of origin.

#### 2.2 Advisory Activities

- Submitted comments on behalf of the WG to the Secretariat of the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Draft Model Provisions for implementing the 1970 UNESCO Convention and combatting trafficking;
- At the request of the BSI board, submitted to the Board draft guidance on the role of subject matter experts in cases of trafficked cultural materials; Board comments have just been received and will be discussed at the next meeting of the WG.
- Members have acted as an Expert Advisor for and contributor to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) two reports on the illicit trade in cultural objects and providing advice to five governments; continuing to support heritage professionals in their efforts to prevent looting and protect movable CP in conflict zones, including advice on best practices for cultural heritage professionals in occupied territory.

#### 2.3 Presentations: Training and Awareness Raising

- The BSI Secretariat launched a section of the BSI website for the WG accessible here at: <https://theblueshield.org/what-we-do/countering-trafficking/>.
- Prepared a training module for the Blue Shield on the subject of illicit trade of cultural objects and on international law.
- Acted as a mentor for a Syrian scholar for the Council for At-Risk Academics.
- Drafted chapters on protection of cultural property during armed conflict for several upcoming multi-authored publications, gave sixteen lectures and additionally participated in conferences.

#### 2.4 Forthcoming

- The WG has planned a webinar on proactive steps to protect movable heritage in advance of a crisis to be coordinated with Blue Shield Greece. We have not yet found a time to offer the webinar but hope to do so in early Autumn 2023.



- October/November 2023 - Planning a conference in Beirut that will have a trafficking and antiquities element and main experts of the WG will be invited to share their case studies and/or experiences.
- Continue to respond to speaking and training invitations: each to be evaluated on receipt.
- Continue discussions of creating and expanding a consultancy network that would be available to provide expertise, referrals to additional experts, and collaborations among members of the WG

I want to express my thanks to Alexia Ogden of the Canvas Art Law Group for her assistance in organizing the Working Group.

Professor Patty Gerstenblith  
Chair

31 May 2023