

PRESS RELEASE - 'No-Strike' list of archaeological sites in Aleppo released

By Heritage for Peace and the UK National Committee of the Blue Shield
4 July, 2013

Newcastle, UK – *Heritage for Peace*, a Spanish NGO, together with UK Blue Shield, have released a list of the most important archaeological sites in Aleppo, Syria, which they are asking all armed forces involved in the conflict to avoid. 93,000 People have lost their lives in the conflict, and hundreds of archaeological sites, historical monuments and heritage institutions have been damaged or destroyed. The city centre is a World Heritage Site with some buildings dating back at least 5,000 years. According to UNESCO, the old city 'has witnessed some of the conflict's most brutal destruction'¹. As a result, the most recent session of the World Heritage Committee (16-27 June) placed the site, along with Syria's other World Heritage Sites, on the World Heritage in Danger list. However the risk to the Ancient City of Aleppo is greater than that to other heritage as the warring parties are currently focussing on retaking the city, and the combat is expected to be intense.

About the list - The list of sites to be avoided was drawn up by Heritage for Peace in consultation with Syrian colleagues. The 20 sites which were chosen include the most important sites in Aleppo, and represent some of the many communities, and the many different types of buildings throughout history. Aleppo has over 2,000 sites of archaeological and historical importance: the city is one of the oldest continuously occupied cities in the world. A spokesperson for Heritage for Peace said "We urge all parties involved in the conflict to respect the international legislation concerning cultural heritage in conflict and avoid any fighting near and on these sites, that some of Aleppo's great history may be preserved for the future".

About Heritage for Peace - *Heritage for Peace* are dedicated to the belief that heritage can provide a common ground for dialogue and is therefore a tool for peace building. Through cultural heritage the Syrian people have a foundation on which to build their future, and thus it should be protected. Heritage for Peace are a non-profit organization who aim to offer aid to heritage professionals working in conflict situations, and to encourage those who may be in a position to do so; to promote the safeguarding and protection of cultural heritage, and to promote understanding across diverse communities of the communal value of heritage.

About Blue Shield – The Blue Shield is the cultural equivalent of the Red Cross. It is the protective emblem specified in the [1954 Hague Convention](#) (Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict) for marking cultural sites to give them protection from attack in the event of armed conflict. The Blue Shield network consists of organizations dealing with museums, archives, audiovisual supports, libraries, as well as monuments and sites. See <http://www.ancbs.org/cms/index.php/en/home>. The UK National Committee of the Blue Shield is based at Newcastle University.

The mission of all involved with Blue Shield is to work for the protection of the world's cultural heritage.

Contact

Professor Peter Stone, OBE, Chair of UK Blue Shield
Newcastle University, Newcastle upon Tyne, England NE1 7RU
Office: +44 (0)191 222 7095
Email: peter.stone@ncl.ac.uk

¹ P116, <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/2013/whc13-37com-7B-Add-en.pdf>