

## **NMDC statement about the protection of cultural heritage in armed conflict**

*The National Museum Directors' Council (NMDC) is gravely concerned by media reports showing the destruction and looting of ancient archaeological sites, artefacts and museums in Iraq and Syria by Islamic State militants. The catastrophic damage inflicted on the cultural heritage of Iraq and Syria is a war crime, and the profits of illicit trade of looted material are used to sustain further atrocities.*

*NMDC welcomes the UK Government's condemnation of the destruction and looting, and the announcement that the Government will ratify the 1954 Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. It is hoped that this can be achieved swiftly. NMDC further welcomes the announcement of a summit to discuss what may be done to safeguard cultural heritage in Syria and Iraq and for a fund to support future action.*

25<sup>th</sup> June 2015