

## Protection of cultural property in armed conflict

### A collection of Basic Rules disseminated during the Kosovo conflict

With a view to halting the destruction of the cultural heritage in Kosovo, UNESCO has prepared a leaflet for the population of Kosovo of both Albanian and Serb ethnic origin, giving the basic rules on protection of the cultural heritage. The text has been compiled in three languages: Albanian, Serb and English.

The seven rules are drawn from the fundamental rules codified by Article 4 of the *Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict*, of 14 May 1954, such as the prohibition of theft, pillage and misappropriation of cultural property and of reprisals against cultural property. The text also addresses illicit traffic in cultural property and destruction of cemeteries.

The leaflet has been distributed through the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and other channels.

It is hoped that this action will raise awareness of the need to protect the cultural heritage, regardless of the ethnic origin of its creators, thus helping to re-establish the fragile civil society in Kosovo and to heal the post-conflict wounds.

UNESCO envisages preparing other language versions of the basic rules, for use in other conflict areas and adapted to the specific conditions of each situation. The text should be distributed by UN peace-keeping contingents employed in the conflict area.

## UNESCO

### Cultural Property — Basic Rules

1. Do not damage or steal cultural property.
2. If you find a cultural object, do not sell it or barter it; bring it to the local administration.
3. Do not abuse cultural objects belonging to other ethnic groups. Do not destroy them; remember that this may inspire them to do the same to cultural objects dear to you.
4. Do not make your house in a church, a monument or museum.
5. Do not sell cultural objects to black market dealers; your country needs those objects.
6. Remember that cultural objects are not only for you but also for your children and grandchildren and for all humanity.
7. Do not damage the cemeteries of other ethnic groups; remember that this may inspire them to do the same to your own cemeteries.

Cultural property is protected by international treaty.

*Damage to cultural property belonging to any people whatsoever means damage to the cultural heritage of all mankind, since each people makes its contribution to the culture of the world.*

1954 Hague Convention, Preamble

**Division of Cultural Heritage  
UNESCO**