

Our commitment to protect Byblos

What is it all about?

In the past, the looting and destruction of cultural heritage was seen as a sign of conquest and death for empires, today we realize that the destruction of cultural heritage leaves a vacuum for the humanity of the future who will be deprived of its legacy.

This is why in 1954, to help prevent the destructions and heavy losses of the past, it was issued the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. It was and it still is the most exhaustive international treaty focusing on the protection of cultural heritage in the event of armed conflict.

We are currently implementing War Free World Heritage Listed Cities, a project promoted within the framework of the ENPI CIUDAD program of the European Commission.



The Convention makes use of a white and blue emblem (left) to facilitate the identification of protected cultural property.

Signing the cultural heritage with three of those hemblems identifies sites posed under Enhanced Protection.

Once Byblos World Heritage Listed site will satisfy the required conditions it will be granted the enhanced protection and it will be signed with three such hemblems.

For further information you may contact:

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BYBLOS FESTIVAL

an international cultural event
in an ancient urban heritage jewel



It is a real privilege to enjoy the Byblos Festival in such a rich cultural scenario and it is our responsibility to preserve it to the future generations preventing or mitigating any damages that may occur due to natural events or human activities.

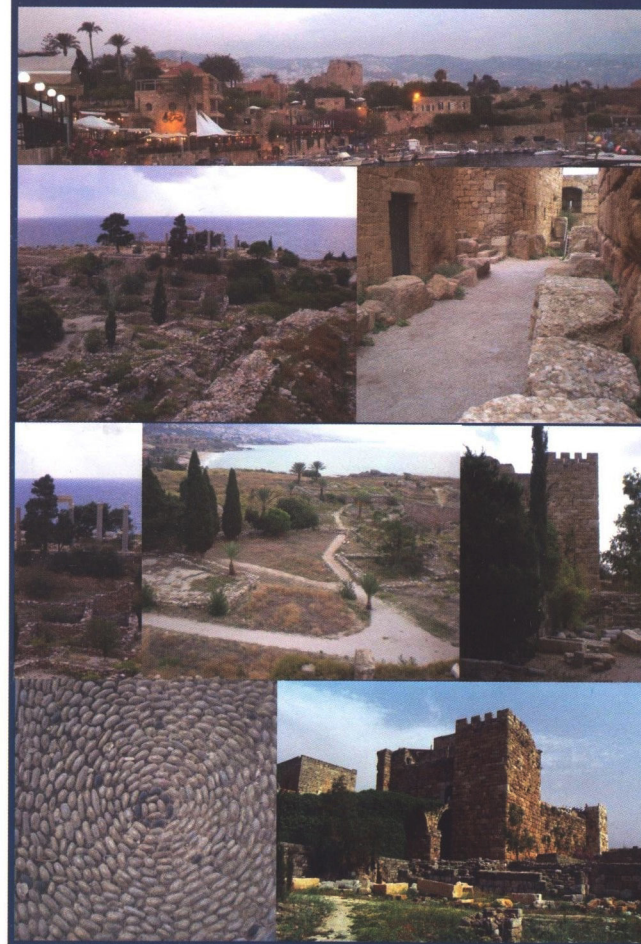


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Welcome to Byblos WORLD HERITAGE SITE

World Heritage are those cultural or natural sites important to the entire humanity because of their unique and universally recognized values according to the 1972 Convention. So far UNESCO enlisted only 936 sites in the World Heritage List including Byblos.



WAR FREE WORLD HERITAGE LISTED CITIES



War Free World Heritage Listed Cities

This project was designed to help create the necessary conditions to protect the ancient city of Byblos from the effects of any human activity, and especially war or armed conflict, and to ensure it remains the attractive place that we enjoy today, a place where culture prevails over hostility, now and for hundreds more Festivals to come.

The project is funded by the European Union under the CIUDAD programme (Cooperation in Urban Development & Dialogue) and implemented by three partners: the Council of the United Municipalities of Jbail (Lead Partner); the Board of the Municipality of Mtskheta, Georgia; and WATCH - the World Association for the Protection of Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage in times of armed conflicts, which is based in Italy. Associates in the partnership are FOCUH – Friends of Cultural Heritage, Turkey, and NEREA – Network for Advanced Technologies, Italy.

The project aims to:

- Establish good practice for Urban and Site Management in cities threatened by armed conflicts;
- Promote widespread awareness of the risks facing World Heritage Listed cities in times of armed conflict;
- Prepare applications for Byblos and Mtskheta to be granted enhanced protection.

The crucial issue at stake is to abide by the rules stipulated within the Hague Convention and its two Protocols, and to maintain this over time as a matter of good local governance.

Project success will help set a precedent that can be replicated for other urban listed heritage sites in war-prone countries in general and in Lebanon in particular.

What's concretely going on?

Already the most important battles have been won! All of the institutions that need to be involved are now firmly committed to protecting Byblos.

Together, we are preparing the dossier to be submitted to the Committee of the 1999 Second Protocol of the Hague Convention at UNESCO for enhanced protection for Byblos. Another dossier is being prepared for the World Heritage sites in the city of Mtskheta in Georgia.

Enhanced protection is higher degree of protection under the 1999 Second Protocol to the Hague Convention. Sites with enhanced protection have the highest possible level of protection from any form of armed conflict. To be granted such protection, a heritage site must meet the following three conditions:

- the site is of the greatest importance to humanity;
- the site is protected by adequate domestic legal and administrative measures recognising its exceptional cultural and historic value and ensuring the highest level of protection;
- the site is not used for military purposes nor to shield military sites.

As we write, a multidisciplinary Civil Military Cooperation group of Lebanese, Georgian and international experts are:

- Developing a Risk Preparedness Plan;
- Preparing to select and train a group of Lebanese experts ;
- Promoting public awareness campaigns in Lebanon and in Georgia so that everyone, experts and the wider community, is prepared to play their part in protecting their World Heritage sites.

Can we help protect Byblos heritage?

Yes! Every citizen can help implement safety measures to protect Byblos world heritage sites in times of turmoil or conflict. There is a lot that you can do and much more that you should not do.

Dissemination of the Convention

'The High Contracting Parties undertake, in time of peace as in time of armed conflict, to disseminate the text of the present Convention and the Regulations for its execution as widely as possible in their respective countries. They undertake, in particular, to include the study thereof in their programmes of military and, if possible, civilian training, so that its principles are made known to the whole population, especially the armed forces and personnel engaged in the protection of cultural property'...

(Art 25 Hague Convention).

This is why YOU, like any other citizen or member of the local community, must play your part in protecting Byblos, that is not only the cradle of the first alphabet, but also a World Heritage list since 1984

You have already started, just by reading this leaflet. Now you know the importance of the issue, perhaps you will contact the project partners to increase your knowledge, to find out more about what you can do to help now, and how you could help in a crisis situation.

One thing everyone can and must do once Byblos has been granted Enhanced Protection is to use their voices and their votes to ensure the city's politicians continue to be vigilant and to follow the rules so Byblos maintains that status. Priorities come and go. We can and must ensure that protecting Byblos remains high on the list and safety measures are always in place.