

TO : IPCQ

OUR REF : 2013/183/SCA/DCO/WOA/LGM/bl

SUBJECT: HIGH VIGILANCE TO RISKS OF ILLICIT TRAFFIC IN CULTURAL PROPERTY FROM SYRIA

We have been informed through our network of experts and through the UNESCO of the imminent risk affecting Syria's cultural heritage, in particular its archeological sites such as Mari located on the Euphrates River.

While we had alerted our 190 member countries in the past months to pay particular vigilance to the risk of appearance on the licit and illicit markets of objects illegally removed from Syria, it has come to our attention that a very precise risk has now been identified.

It seems indeed that looters supposedly originating from neighbouring countries are performing illegal excavations on the sites of Mari. Given the current Syrian context, there is no law enforcement presence in the area of Mari to monitor and prevent further looting.

We wish to raise your awareness and ask you to take all necessary measures to alert the law enforcement agencies in your respective countries for border controls to be reinforced and provenance checks to be performed on suspicious cultural objects that you could come across.

It is of utmost importance to provide all possible support to the Syrian authorities in protecting their cultural heritage, which constitutes the world's cultural heritage.

Thank you very much for your kind cooperation,

Best regards,

INTERPOL General Secretariat

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2013/183/SCA/DCO/WOA/LGM/bl  
illegales Kulturgüter