



Concept Note

Post-Conflict Reconstruction of Cultural Heritage in the Middle East and North Africa

Synopsis

This Concept Note outlines the rationale and objectives of the Post-Conflict Reconstruction of Cultural Heritage in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) conference. The conference is a collaborative initiative between the School of Social Sciences and Humanities at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies and the Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies at the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies.

The conference aims to provide a platform for critical discussion and in-depth analysis of post-conflict heritage reconstruction, management of cultural resources, and recovery of societies in MENA, with a particular focus on the Arab states. The conference offers an opportunity for scholars and professionals at different stages of their career and from various disciplinary backgrounds to present and discuss their ongoing research, establish networks, receive feedback from peers, and disseminate knowledge production in the Arab region and beyond.

The conference aims to explore the challenges to, and opportunities for, post-conflict reconstruction of cultural heritage in MENA. The conference takes a holistic, inter-disciplinary approach to studying war-torn societies and their cultural heritage reconstruction and recovery. It seeks papers that combine a range of theoretical and empirical perspectives on post-conflict reconstruction and welcomes contributions from a plurality of methodological approaches.

The Doha Institute for Graduate Studies and the Center of Conflict and Humanitarian Studies, in collaboration with Qatar Museums and Qatar National Library are pleased to invite scholars, postdocs, PhD researchers, practitioners, and professionals to submit their paper proposals on the topics outlined below.

Call for Papers

Over the past few decades, the MENA region has been caught up in a succession of political upheavals, deep instability, and armed conflicts. The escalation of tension, and in some cases large-scale violence, in places such as, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Palestine, Syria, and Yemen, have affected every single aspect of daily life, whether social, cultural, political, and economic. Cultural heritage sites, monuments, and museums have been severely damaged and looted; hundreds of thousands of people have been killed; millions uprooted and displaced; and decades of developmental progress have been reversed.

This vast scale of cultural heritage destruction over the past decade has created an urgent need for a critical conversation about, and interrogation of, reconstruction and recovery in the region. Reconstruction thinking has been spurred on in the past few years by regional and international efforts to rebuild war-affected heritage sites, monuments, and infrastructure, in historic cities and archaeological heritage sites such as, Aleppo, Mosul, and Palmyra. Whilst these examples have been subject of renewed research interest, the wider task of rebuilding entire cities and countries in MENA in the early 2020s faces the obstacle of lack of success stories of recovery. The conference contributes towards a comparative knowledge base on the obstacles to, and enablers of, heritage reconstruction, management of cultural resources, and recovery of societies in post-conflict MENA. It builds upon the growing academic research agenda that has produced timely and thought-provoking debates on the future of the heritage and culture in post-conflict societies in the region (Meskell 2018¹; Munawar & Symonds 2022²; Newson & Young 2017³).

Those wishing to participate can submit papers on any of the following themes: protection and rebuilding of built heritage; cultural management in post-conflict settings; re-production and promotion of cultural memory; silenced and marginalized narratives and contested memories; reconciliation, transitional justice and prosecuting heritage criminals; impact of reconstruction on refugees and internal displacement; state and non-state agency in cultural management and national identity rebuilding; and planning and financing post-conflict reconstruction of cultural heritage.

The conference is open to comparative studies that apply to MENA, including cultural heritage reconstruction and recovery experiences in other regions. We welcome contributions that offer new methodological and theoretical approaches, and explore the potentials of creative economy and innovative technologies in cultural management and post-conflict reconstruction.

Our aim is to bring together researchers and specialists across the world from a wide range of academic and professional backgrounds, including but not limited to: anthropology,

1 Meskell, L. 2018. *A future in ruins: UNESCO, world heritage, and the dream of peace*. Oxford University Press.

2 Munawar, N.A. & Symonds, J. 2022. *Post-Conflict Reconstruction, Forced migration & Community Engagement: The Case of Aleppo, Syria*, *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 28 (9): 1017-1035.

3 Newson, P.G. & Young, R. 2017. *Post-Conflict Archaeology and Cultural Heritage*. Routledge.

archaeology, architecture, critical heritage studies, development studies, history, memory studies, museum studies, migration studies, peace and conflict studies, political science and international relations, post-conflict recovery studies, and sociology of art. The conference is also open to participation by practitioners and experts in conservation and restoration of cultural heritage.

Conference Details

The conference will be hosted on 7-8 March 2023. The event will be held at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies, Doha, Qatar.

How to apply?

Please send an abstract (400 words) to cfp.conference@dohainstitute.edu.qa by **December 15, 2022**. The organizing committee will notify all applicants about the status of their applications by **mid-January, 2023**. Accepted applicants should submit their papers (around 5,000 words) by **1 March, 2023**.

The organizers will cover accommodation and meals for all participants in Doha. Funding is available for travel expenses on a competitive basis and will be based on an application process. We will prioritize applications from researchers lacking support from their home institutions.

Conference language: English and Arabic.