

Bilateral Agreements help protect ancient cultures

Under the UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property of 1970 (UNESCO Convention) more than 100 signatories join forces to protect of the world's shared cultural heritage.

As the first major art-importing country to ratify the Convention, the U.S. signed into law the Convention on Cultural Property Implementation Act (CPIA) in 1983, enabling the U.S. government to enter into emergency and bilateral agreements to restrict the importation of specified objects that are in danger of being looted from archaeological sites. Bilateral agreements have been proven effective in stemming the flow of illicit antiquities.

When a country makes a request for a bilateral agreement, the U.S. President decides whether or not to enter into the agreement. The State Department considers the recommendations of the Cultural Property Advisory Committee (CPAC), which consists of 11 private citizens.

Appointed by the President, CPAC represents the interests of the museums, private collectors, dealers and the general public.

Countries with bilateral agreements with the U.S.



For more information, please visit the U.S. State Department International Cultural Property Protection website: <http://exchanges.state.gov/culprop/index.html>.