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ARCHITECTURAL
HISTORIANS**

75 TH ANNIVERSARY

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May 5, 2015

The Honorable John F. Kerry
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Re: ISIS Cultural Destruction

Dear Secretary Kerry,

I am writing on behalf of the Society of Architectural Historians (SAH) in support of any and all efforts to prevent further destruction by ISIS and ISIS-affiliated forces of the cultural heritage of Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Liberia, Mali, and other affected regions. The recent, deliberate destruction and vandalism of such internationally significant cultural sites as the Mosul Library, the Mosul Museum, and the archaeological site of Nineveh, as well as numerous less well-known sites, is deeply disturbing. Equally disturbing is the knowledge that the damage continues as a result of ongoing armed conflict as well as the cloud of collateral activities, including vandalism, looting, and theft, that occur in its wake. The loss of these sites, many of which are numbered among the most significant in the world, will forever separate us from the priceless information that they contain and, by extension, from our collective past.

In advance of the United States-led invasion, a number of the most significant statuary and other cultural and archaeological objects from Nineveh and Harta were moved from the museum in Mosul to the Baghdad museum. As a result, these particular objects are protected from the senseless cultural destruction in progress. Unfortunately, however, many museum objects were not relocated and remain endangered. As well, related architectural resources, objects too large to move, and the archaeological sites themselves, are at extreme risk of damage or destruction. Iraq is not alone in suffering this loss – the destruction of cultural patrimony continues across the Middle East and northern Africa, following in the wake of human conflict. The

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architectural and cultural heritage of all these affected regions is integral to an understanding of the history of human civilization across the globe.

SAH strongly endorses and supports all efforts to document, salvage, and restore the cultural heritage of all of these regions threatened by warfare, looting, and organized destruction. In particular, we strongly support the work of such organizations as the American Schools of Oriental Research, which is actively working with the State Department (particularly regarding Syria) to survey and monitor the myriad sites that ISIS has either already destroyed or vandalized, or is likely to target in the future. Several members of SAH are experts in the historic architecture characteristic of the areas currently under threat. If SAH can be of assistance in any way, either as an organization or by putting members of your staff in touch with individual SAH members with particular expertise, it will be our privilege so to do.

We are grateful for your efforts in this regard, and we strongly support any endeavor by the State Department to protect the irreplaceable cultural heritage of Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Liberia, Mali, and other regions affected by warfare and its aftermath.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. C. Green" with a long horizontal flourish extending from the end of the name.

Bryan Clark Green, Ph.D., LEED AP BD+C
Chair, Heritage Conservation Committee
Society of Architectural Historians

CC : GEN. Martin E. Dempsey, U.S. Army, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff