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Threatened Cultural Heritage



A **report** published by UNESCO and UNITAR (United Nations

Institute for Training and Research) in late June illustrates how **satellite imagery analysis can help to assess potential damage to cultural heritage sites** today. The report, which includes **examples from Iraq, Nepal, Syria and Yemen**, covers the protection of cultural heritage both in conflict situations and during natural disasters (e.g. earthquakes, floods). The promoting organisations state that **cultural heritage around the world suffers from intentional attacks, collateral damage, looting and the effects of natural disasters**. In this context, reaching affected sites and areas quickly to monitor the situation, plan for restoration and prevent further loss often proves very difficult. Building on the **partnership established by UNESCO and UNITAR in 2014**, satellite images developed through UNITAR's UNOSAT programme have contributed to the work of UNESCO and heritage experts to evaluate and protect sites in Iraq, Syria, Yemen and Nepal. According to **Francesco Bandarin**, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Culture, "monitoring cultural heritage in areas affected by conflict or natural disasters, including through the use of satellite imagery, is **a critical step to start planning for recovery**." "These are good examples of **how innovative applications of satellite imagery and other geo-spatial technologies make a difference** in the way the United Nations supports its member states," said **Einar Bjorgo**, Manager of UNOSAT. For example, a **"before and after" scenario elaborated in the report examines the archaeological site of Nimrud, Iraq**. Comparing UNOSAT satellite imagery from 18 April, 2015 to that of 7 March 2015, the extent and localization of damage and destruction inflicted by ISIS/Daesh upon the Palace of King Ashurnasirpal II (883-859 BC) becomes clear. In **Nepal**, following the 25 April 2015 earthquake, satellite imagery helped map **which historic temples and monuments of Kathmandu were damaged and to what extent, and which were still intact**. This

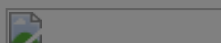
allowed experts to better assess needs and plan reparation measures. It is worth recalling that the **protection of heritage at risk** remains one core activity of UNESCO's work, with recent campaigns including the **#unite4heritage** campaign. For **additional information and access to the report**, please visit <http://en.unesco.org/news/satellite-imagery-helping-monitor-cultural-heritage-sites-under-threat>

Pictured above: Nimrud Citadel, Iraq, 18 April 2015. Source Airbus D&S, Pléiades Imagery © 2016. Analysis by UNITAR-UNOSAT

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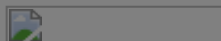


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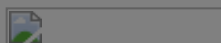
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