



**Appeal for the Protection of the Cultural Heritage in Yugoslavia
January 28th 2000**

The International Committee of the Blue Shield (ICBS) urges all parties in the present conflict in the Balkans to comply with the international treaties relating to armed conflicts, especially the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its new Second Protocol, agreed by 84 countries and two organisations (ICBS, ICRC) in The Hague on 26 March 1999.

Attention has been paid to the human suffering: civilians have been killed or wounded and hundreds of thousands of people have been forced to leave their homes and become refugees. The International Committee of the Blue Shield expresses its sincere sympathy for all those who suffer under this violence. Cultural heritage constitutes a fundamental part of the identity and dignity of peoples and is always a victim during armed conflicts.

The ICBS expresses its serious concern about all damage to the cultural heritage of the peoples of Yugoslavia resulting from military action or other deeds of violence by all sides in the conflict.

The ICBS therefore calls upon all parties in the conflict to do everything within their power to protect museums, archives, libraries, monuments and all other sites that are expressions of the history and the right of existence of the peoples in this region.

The mission of the ICBS, which has taken up the emblem of The Hague Convention of the 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, is to collect and disseminate information, and to co-ordinate action in emergency situations affecting cultural heritage, such as armed conflicts or natural disasters.

The ICBS was founded in 1996 by four non-governmental organisations:

ICA: International Council on Archives

ICOM: International Council of Museums

ICOMOS: International Council on Monuments and Sites

IFLA: International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions

ICA

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